**The End of All Things is at Hand**

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**1 Peter 4:1-7**

**Wednesday Evening**

**March 29, 2023**

**1 Peter 4:1-7**

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, 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.

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. 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.

5 They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. 6 For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. 7 But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.

**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,**

Saints, Peter explained that Christ had suffered and died for sins, once for all, and that believers should be ready to suffer.

He explained that if they had to suffer, it should be for doing good, not for doing evil, in order to be a good witness to unbelievers.

Here the point is slightly different. Believers ought to be ready to suffer as Christ suffered—not simply to be a good witness to others, but in order to stay away from sin.

The phrase arm yourselves is a military metaphor. With what were they to arm themselves?

The same attitude that Christ had toward suffering. This does not mean that believers should actively seek martyrdom.

Nonetheless, they should arm themselves for death if necessary. If believers suffer, it ought to be for living the Christian faith; they ought to suffer courageously, knowing that God will ultimately be victorious.

Those who are armed with this intention have an unswerving resolve to do God’s will in every situation; those so armed will be able to stand strong in the face of any persecution.

They can persevere because of their personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

**John 15:20-21**

20 Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. 21 But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me.

Saints, having died in Christ, Christians are one with him and are legally free from the penalty of sin. They are in union with Christ, so they regard themselves as dead to sin.

**Romans 6:5-11**

5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. 7 For he who has died has been freed from sin. 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. 10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. 11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Saints, believers are no longer bound by sin’s penalty; they must strive, in practice, to be free from its power. Suffering can be helpful in that area.

Just as Christ’s sufferings led to death and resurrection, so our suffering can help us stop sinning and enter more fully into a new life of service to God.

Christ’s suffering made him victorious over Satan; believers’ suffering, if they follow Christ’s example, can strengthen their faith and solidify their obedient lifestyle.

Believers ought to “arm” themselves with a resolve to be like Christ when they face suffering.

**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.**

Saints, When believers have so armed themselves (4:1), their strengthened faith and resolve to obey will cause them to be anxious to do the will of God.

**Romans 6:1-4**

1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? 3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

**Colossians 3:3**

“For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God”

This describes the difference between believers’ lives without Christ and their new lives with him.

Before conversion, they lived only to satisfy their evil desires; after conversion, they are concerned with living by God’s will, not their own.

**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.**

Saints, Peter urged the believers to no longer live as they had in the past. His list of evil activities resembles Paul’s in Romans 13

**Romans 13:13**

“Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy”

Saints, these are examples of what does not please God:

actions, activities, and attitudes that belong to the darkness. These have no place in believers’ lives.

**1. Immorality is open and excessive indulgence in sexual sins.**

**2. Lust is sinful human desire.**

**3. Feasting and drunkenness refers to excessive eating and use of wine and strong drink.**

**4. Wild parties (orgies) were often filled with sexual promiscuity. These were often associated with festivals of some pagan gods.**

**5. Worship of idols refers to idolatrous acts.**

Saints, Peter culminated his list with these words, indicating that many of the above acts were associated with the worship of pagan gods.

**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.**

Saints, when a person becomes a Christian, sometimes his or her lifestyle changes drastically.

**2 Corinthians 5:17-19**

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,

19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Saints, this was especially true for first-century believers who had come out of the morally corrupt pagan world. Many of Peter’s readers were Jewish Christians,

many also had come from a pagan background. Former Jews would have at least led a morally upright life, while former pagans had been involved in the activities that Peter had just listed.

Saints, Christians no longer desire to join their pagan friends in the wicked things they do. These friends had sought pleasure by denying themselves nothing.

Together, they did it all. When the Christians stopped, their friends not only are very surprised, but they also say evil things. This describes the reaction of people who love darkness when they become confronted by the light.

A believer’s refusal to participate in an activity is a silent condemnation of that activity. Unbelievers then react with hostility, often because they want to justify their actions or silence their own consciences.

**5 They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. 6 For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.**

Saints, Unbelievers who live immorally and who say evil things about Christians will one day have to face God.

This gives believers great relief and confidence—they will receive justice. God will judge everyone, both the living and the dead.

And judgment may come at any moment. That is why the Good News was preached even to those who have died. These words have caused debate among scholars, resulting in four main views:

1. Some tie this verse back to Christ’s proclamation of salvation to the unbelievers who lived before he came. But an understanding of a “second chance” after death in this verse argues against everything else in Scripture, and would be unhelpful to Peter’s readers who were being encouraged to persevere in suffering.

2. Others look back also to that Christ was preaching salvation to those Old Testament people who had believed in God in the time before Christ preached on earth, offering them the gift he brought—eternal life.

3. Still others say that this verse refers to the gospel proclaimed by the apostles to those on the earth who were physically alive but spiritually dead.

4. Most likely, however, Peter was referring to those dead at that time of his writing who had heard and accepted the gospel. Many people in the early church had concerns about life after death.

In Thessalonica, Christians worried that loved ones who died before Christ’s return might never see Christ.

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 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. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Saints, they wondered if those who died would be able to experience the promised eternal life. Peter explained that these believers, although their bodies were punished with death—

that is, they died physically as everyone dies physically—will still one day live in the spirit as God does.

Peter’s readers needed to be reminded that the dead (both the faithful and their oppressors) would be raised from the dead—the faithful to eternal reward, the unfaithful to eternal punishment.

God’s judgment will be perfectly fair, Peter pointed out, because even those dead from ages past had heard the gospel. The Good News was first announced when Jesus Christ preached on the earth,

but it has been operating since before the creation of the world, and it eternally affects all people, the dead as well as the living.

**Ephesians 1:4**

“just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love”

**7 But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.**

Saints, this verse gives us the vertical component (how we relate to God) to help us overcome the pressure to sin.

The fact that God is “ready to judge” means that the end of the world is coming soon. These early Christians who faced persecution took great comfort in the fact that their suffering would one day end and that the evil ways of the wicked would be judged.

The Lord is ready and waiting, desiring that the gospel should be preached to all the nations before he returns.

Peter, like the other apostles, was always aware that Christ could return at any moment. Likewise, believers today must always remember that Christ can come at any time.

**Romans 13:11-14**

11 And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. 12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

**1 Corinthians 7:29**

“But this I say, brethren, the time is short, so that from now on even those who have wives should be as though they had none”

**1 John 2:18**

“Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour”

Saints, the shortness of time remaining should motivate believers to be earnest and disciplined in their prayers. The meaning for today calls for self-discipline when we pray.

Rather than merely a quick blessing on our food or a three-minute devotional, we should reserve extended times for sober, direct communication with God. Lack of prayer will render us unprepared for the end times.

Saints, Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 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. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

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**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**