

1st Peter Ch. 4

v.1-2

-Being a committed follower of Christ isn't always going to be easy

-Joh 15:20 "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave 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.

-we just need to mentally prepare ourselves for that

-our suffering does not cleanse us from sin, Jesus did that for us

-but when we decide to cease stop living a sinful lifestyle, usually there is suffering involved

-deciding to give up an addiction like alcohol or drugs involves suffering

-deciding that you can't hang out with your old friends anymore because they are leading you away from the Lord involves a great deal of suffering

-living an immoral life is easy, it comes natural to the flesh

-making a decision to live a disciplined life for God is not easy

V.3

-how many times do we hear people talking about "sewing their wild oats"?

-that seems to be an expectation that older people have of young people

-they seem to think that there is a certain amount of immorality built into teens and they just need to get it out of their system

-Peter says that there was plenty of time in the past to have fulfilled the desires of the flesh

-after you hear and understand the gospel, you have no business going back to that lifestyle

-You can't do both

-people who live a lifestyle of partying, drunkenness, and sexual immorality but still call themselves Christians do a lot of damage to the cause of Christ

-no wonder so many people say Christians are hypocrites

V.4

-but those who do decide to separate themselves from the ungodly will usually be made fun or harassed in some way

-people don't like being around people who they think are morally superior to them

-it's interesting that many alcoholics don't have much money but are more than willing to offer their drinks to others

-because if you drink with them, then they don't feel judged about their sin

V.5

-If you ever get down and depressed because all the worldly people you know seem to be having so much more fun than you, just re-read Luke 16:19-31

Luk 16:19 "Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day.

Luk 16:20 "And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores,

Luk 16:21 and longing to be fed with the *crumbs* which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores.

Luk 16:22 "Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried.

Luk 16:23 "In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and *saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom.

Luk 16:24 "And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.'

Luk 16:25 "But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony.'

Luk 16:26 'And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and *that* none may cross over from there to us.'

Luk 16:27 "And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house--

Luk 16:28 for I have five brothers--in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'

Luk 16:29 "But Abraham *said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.'

Luk 16:30 "But he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!'

Luk 16:31 "But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'"

-so the living and the dead will be judged?

-aren't the believers exempt from judgment?

- **2Co 5:10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

-we do not earn our way to heaven by our works, but we receive rewards in heaven for them

-those who choose to reject Christ's sacrifice for them will be judged for their sin

Rev 20:11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.

Rev 20:12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.

V.6

-Peter is not talking about preaching to those who passed on to give them another chance of salvation

-The bible is very clear that the decision for salvation can only be made while you are alive

Heb 9:27 And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this *comes* judgment,

2Co 6:2 for He says, "AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU." Behold, now is "THE ACCEPTABLE TIME," behold, now is "THE DAY OF SALVATION"--

-if you hear anyone say the gospel was preached to them after they died or that God saved them after they died, they are teaching you a dangerous theology
-but the gospel has been preached in some form, even to those who are now dead

Rom 1:20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

-some people have the idea that God is trying to hide salvation from some people

-like a game show host whose job it is to tell people how to win the prize but secretly hopes they don't figure it out

-nothing could be further from the truth

-God will go to the end of the earth to save people

-His genuine heart's desire is that everyone wins the prize

2Pe 3:9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

V.7

-the implications of this verse are mind blowing

-how would we change the way we live if we truly believed that the end of all things was near?

-all of a sudden the worries of this world would mean nothing

-all the deadlines at work, overdue bills, obligations and people's expectations would have no priority on our life because the return of Christ would make everything else insignificant

-now I know we can't be irresponsible and live our lives like that but it helps to give us a better perspective on the things that are really important

-but since we know Christ is returning soon, we need to be ready and help others to get ready

-because there are many who don't believe that He will return

2Pe 3:3 Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with *their* mocking, following after their own lusts,
2Pe 3:4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For *ever* since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation."

V.8-9

-if you truly love someone, your love isn't dependant on them never making mistakes

-this love he is referring to is the same agape (unconditional) love that Jesus has for us

-Jesus dying on the cross is the perfect example of love covering a multitude of sins

-although love covers a multitude of sins, we are not to condone sinful behavior in other believers

-Jesus loves us unconditionally but still prunes us and corrects us to remove sin from our lives

-we are to do the same with other believers

-being hospitable to someone who has wronged you is a tall order

-everything in your flesh says you want to avoid that person or seek revenge on them

-But we are commanded not to even complain about them

If it were only non-believers that we had to deal with, it would be much simpler

-we expect that sort of behavior from people in the world

-but the fact is that many of the problems we face in life have to do with other believers

V.10-11

-no one should ever wonder if they have a spiritual gift

-if you are a believer in Christ, you have at least one spiritual gift

-The question is, what is it and how are you going to use it?

-it's interesting that Peter brings the topic of using spiritual gifts into the conversation about living peacefully with other believers

-sometimes it takes the perspective of someone with a different spiritual gift to help reconcile or keep the peace

-the point is, whatever gift you have, use it to glorify God

-we see people so often with great talents and abilities using their gifts selfishly for their own personal gain

-Whether it's in music, finances, speaking etc.

1Co 12:7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

-they are not given to us for our own good and we will be held accountable as to how we use them

V.12-13

-one of the worst things you can tell someone is "once you're a Christian, all your problems will go away"

-the bible makes it clear time after time that believers can expect to go through hard times

-but there are people who believe that God's purpose for them is to live a life of financial prosperity and to never be sick

-some will even go as far as saying that if you sick or broke, that it must be a result of sin in your life

-Nothing could be further from the truth

-there are plenty of people in this world who want nothing to do with Christ and are healthy and very prosperous

-we need to stop equating financial prosperity with blessings from God

-there are times that God does use money to bless people, but that's not always the case

-look at the reason Peter gives for us having to endure these fiery ordeals in our lives

-for our testing

-I don't believe that God brings every bad situation into our life, but that He allows it and will use it to test us and to teach us and to cause us to grow

-He is much more interested in our character and the state of our spiritual life than He is about our temporary comfort

-and then comes the hard part

-not only does God want us to endure the trials, but to rejoice in them

-although this sounds crazy, it actually makes a lot of sense

Pro 3:12 For whom the LORD loves He reproves, Even as a father *corrects* the son in whom he delights.

Heb 12:6 FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES."

Heb 12:10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He *disciplines us* for *our* good, so that we may share His holiness.

-being disciplined or tested by God is a sure sign that He loves you

-and that is why we should rejoice in the hard times

V.14-16

-there is a difference between sufferings that are allowed by God and sufferings that are a result of poor decisions you have made

-if wind up in prison for burglary or some other crime, that's nothing to rejoice in

-if you are on death row for murder, that doesn't carry any spiritual reward

-Those are results of poor decisions of the flesh

-but if you suffer in the least bit for the cause of Christ, God will reward you

Mat 10:42 "And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward."

V.17-18

-It's clear throughout the bible that believers will not be judged in regards to salvation

-**Rom 8:1** Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

-but we are judged, not to be punished, but to be refined and pruned,

-and if our pruning is that painful, can you imagine what awaits those who reject Christ?

V.19

-faith is all about trust

-it is actually the ultimate act of trust

-when people sign up for a certain religion, they are essentially saying "I put my faith in this religion to save my eternal soul"

-but the sad thing is that you don't get a second chance if you are wrong

-if what you put your trust in the wrong religion or faith, you will pay for it with everlasting torment

-so choose wisely

-and believers....speak up!