

In Regard to the Times
1 Peter 4:4-11

The last time that I taught for Refuel – I covered the first 3 verses of chapter 4. Talking about sanctification that happens in the life of a believer as the result of our association in Jesus Christ. In both His death and His resurrection.

In verse 3 Peter pointed out that **we have wasted enough time** in our lives perusing the desires of the flesh. Walking in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, wild parties, and such. It is these things that vs 4 is referring to:

- **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.

It is noted that the unsaved world thinks that it is strange that believers **no longer** pursue those things. In fact, they don't just think that it is odd, but they often respond **with verbal abuse and slander**. But that should be no surprise since they blasphemed Jesus in the same manner as He hung on the cross. They mocked him; therefore - they are going to mock us.

If you doubt this for a second, just go and stand in front of an abortion clinic and take a stand and pray for the un-born and you will quickly feel the sting of the unsaved world.

But Jesus explained why this is so.

John 3:19–20 (NKJV) — 19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and **men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20** For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

But lest as believers we begin to think much of ourselves, we must remember that but for the grace of God in our own lives, that would still be in darkness as well.

Ephesians 2:2–3 (NKJV) — 2 in which you **once walked according to the course of this world**, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, **3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind**, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

It is understanding God's grace towards us that should cause us to have grace towards unsaved world. Having the heart to patiently show them God's love.

I think of the account recorded in the gospel of Luke when Jesus and his disciples encountered rejection by those in a Samaritan village, because they were headed to Jerusalem. Upon observing the villagers reaction, James and John asked Jesus if He wanted them to call down fire and brimstone to destroy the villagers. But Jesus rebuked them explaining that He didn't come to destroy men's lives but to save them.

When the world reject and ridiculous us, we should not be surprised, **nor should we attempt to put on the Judges robe.** We are not here to call down fire and brimstone. There will be a judgement day coming, but we ourselves are not the judge.

- **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.

There is a judgement day coming.

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

Rev 20:13 tells us that death and hell will give up the dead that are in them. There is a day coming when every person will stand in judgment. Both, those who are alive at the time of Jesus' return and those who are dead.

But there are two types of judgment.

- For the believer, there is the judgment seat of Christ to receive rewards according to how they have run the race.

2 Corinthians 5:10 (NKJV) — 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, **that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.**

It is not a judgment of condemnation. Yet there will be rewards given and rewards taken. We must remember that **these are eternal rewards.** Our goal as believers should be to run our race well. So that we would not be ashamed when we stand before Jesus.

Erwin Lutzer once commented on a conversation that he had with a gentleman who told him, I would be satisfied just to ride in the back seat in heaven. Erwin responded – **But what if Jesus wanted you in the front seat and not the back?**

That man talking with Erwin was content with his fire insurance. He wasn't concerned about the how he ran the race. That is the case with many today. They don't understand the value of the eternal rewards that they are giving up by not running their race well. Yeah they will be in heaven, but as one who has barely escaped through the fire.

But the non-believer –

- they will stand before the judgment seat of God. What we call the White Throne Judgment. Not for rewards, **but for condemnation**. Receiving their sentence for a life of sin.

Because they rejected the free gift of forgiveness and salvation offered through Jesus's death on the cross. They would not accept Jesus's death in their place, so they must pay the price of their own sin. There will be a day for the non-believer where they will be judged **for every single sin**. **Every thought, every word spoken, and every deed done**. And they will pay that penalty in full in their eternal torment.

And so, it says in **vs 6**: For this reason, the gospel was preached **to those who are now dead**. There is a little bit of disagreement as to who this verse was referring to. Those who are physically dead or those who are spiritually dead.

Chuck Smith was convinced, as am I, that it spoke of those who are still spiritually dead. Separated from God in their sin. They are told the gospel - In order that they may receive new life. A life freed from the power of sin that had control over them and would eventually bring that eternal condemnation.

Spurgeon noted that **"to those who are now dead"** might have been referring to those were already killed for their faith in Christ.

The fact is that sin has brought about death to man. And even though the believer receives eternal life in Jesus, we still experience a physical death. **Sometimes even a tragic death** as a result of persecution. But regardless of how and when death comes. For the believer, there is the promise of spiritual and eternal life, even though we die physically.

The fact that everyone will die, should motivate us to share the gospel with a lost world.

Paul noted in 2 Cor 5:11 – **that knowing the terror or fear of the Lord**, we persuade men.

As believes we know of the judgment that the lost are going to face and therefore, **our hearts should be to share the gospel** with them. At all cost.

"If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to Hell over our dead bodies. And if they perish, let them perish with our arms wrapped about their knees, imploring them to stay. If Hell must be filled, let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go unwarned and unprayed for." — **Charles Spurgeon**

Not only should we understand the reality of judgment – but we should recognize the times in which we live. Peter then goes on to say:

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

In previous generations, the church lived expectantly. Ready for the blessed hope. The return of Christ. **They believed the end of all things was at hand.** The church has become somewhat complacent today to the **fact that the end of all things is near.**

What should be the result of believing the end is near?

There should be a dual effect. First it should give a sense of urgency for evangelizing to the lost. Second it should have a purifying effect in our own lives.

Matthew 24:44 (NLT) — You also must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected.

Peter tells us that we are to be **serious** and **watchful** in our prayers – knowing the times

This word translated **as serious** – means to be **soberly wise and of sound mind**. Peter notes later in 5:8 that we are to be sober and vigilant because our adversary the devil prowls about like a roaring lion looking for pray.

When I think of the idea of being sober and watchful in our prayers. Think of the attitude with which one enters into a **war room** during battle .

The term war room is derived from the military and was first used in 1901. This was a room used by the military to meet and plan war strategies.

One would not just hap-hazardly enter into that room. One would come in with the understanding of the seriousness of the battle and understand what was at stake. Our war room is not a physical room, but a state of mind, where we surrender the battle to the Lord.

There was a movie called War Room put out in 2015 that depicted the idea of the prayer closet being the war room. In the movie, it was in the prayer closet that the woman played by Pricillia Shirer engaged in the battle against the enemy who was seeking to destroy her marriage and her family.

The point is to come to the Lord in prayer sober mindedly and expecting to engage in strategic planning. Understanding the reality of the spiritual warfare that we face as believers.

I think of how America was aware that terrorism existed, and even aware of the casualties suffered by others. But it all seemed distant and dare I even say somewhat insignificant.

But on September 11th of 2001, that all changed. The enemy became real and present. Life for all Americans changed from that day forward.

We must realize that there is a real and present war at hand today against an enemy that is much more powerful than any terrorist group. We are engaged in battle with an enemy who is bent on destruction for every believer. He is like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.

In regard to the times in which we live – we cannot afford to be asleep any longer. The enemy has already proclaimed war! We must be steadfast, sober and prayerful as we engage in battle.

Proverbs 21:31 (NKJV) — 31 The horse is prepared for the day of battle, But deliverance is of the LORD.

Close in prayer -