

The Attitude That Costs You – And Saves You

1 Peter 4:1-6

Mercy Hill Church | February 1, 2026

Big Idea: When you live for Jesus, expect rejection from the world -- but rest in God's final verdict.

Context & Background of 1 Peter

- 1 Peter was written around 62-63 AD by the apostle Peter to predominantly gentile (non-Jewish) Christians scattered throughout what would be the modern day Turkey region.
- The apostle Peter wrote this letter to encourage these Christians to persevere in their faith as outsiders. They were a, "double-minority" – they were the minority as Christians in a predominantly pagan society. And they were a minority as gentile (non-Jewish) Christians – since Christianity was considered a "Jewish" religion in its earlier stages.
- The apostle Peter writes this letter to encourage them to "persevere as faith exiles" (sermon series title) – knowing that their ultimate home, their ultimate place of belonging, their ultimate place of comfort, security and peace is with the Lord. They belong to the Kingdom of God – not the kingdom(s) of this world.
- 1 Peter 1-2, Peter reminds us of the Gospel message – our identity and security in Christ Jesus
- 1 Peter 3 and following, Peter unpacks how the Gospel message shapes and transforms us
 - How we are to live out the Gospel in different life circumstances and situations as faithful exiles

1. The Attitude of Christ: Suffering & Living for God (vv.1-2)

- (cf. 2:9-12, Hebrews 12:1-4)
- **1 Peter 2:9–12** But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. **10** Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. **11** Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. **12** Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.
- Quote: Ajith Fernando's *The Call to Joy & Pain: Embracing Suffering in Your Ministry*
 - "Now even though we know that Jesus rose from the dead with a great triumph, it is not easy to follow him to death..." or suffering -- in referencing Hebrews 12:1-4
 - **Hebrews 12:1-4** Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is **seated at the right hand of the throne of God.** 3 **Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.** 4 In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.
- **Expect To Suffer As You Follow Jesus (v.1a)**
- (cf. 2 Timothy 1:8, 2:3, 3:12, Philippians 1:29, 3:10, Acts 5:41, Matthew 5:10)
 - "Arm yourself" – prepare for battle; have the right attitude & mindset
 - Expectation and attitude is everything:
 - Playing football – expect to get hit, to get sore

- Playing baseball – expect to strike out or get hit by a ball
 - Expecting parents – expect to be tired, expect life to be radically different
- The Bible reminds us of this over and over again – to expect suffering, difficulties:
 - **2 Timothy 1:8** Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God,
 - **2 Timothy 2:3** Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.
 - **2 Timothy 3:12** Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,
 - **Philippians 1:29** For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake,
 - **Philippians 3:10** that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,
 - **Acts 5:41** Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.
 - **Matthew 5:10** “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
 - Contra health & wealth gospel (re: prosperity theology)
 - So what does that say about you
- **See Suffering As Evidence that You Are Following God And Not Yourself or Sin (vv.1b-2)**
- (cf. **James 1:22-25, John 8:31, Psalm 119:105**)
- What kind of suffering? Different types of suffering:
 - 1) Suffering on account of personal sin (e.g., lack of friends due to gossip & pride, fired from a job due to unethical conduct, etc.)
 - 2) Suffering on account of living in a sinful (fallen) world (e.g. diseases, disasters, systemic/political oppression, etc.)
 - Caution: Be careful of having a false “Christian” martyrdom mentality where we think we’re suffering on account of our faith when in reality it’s due to our sin!
 - 3) Suffering on account of being the people of God
 - *Different Types of Christian Suffering (from How Long O Lord: Reflections on Suffering & Evil by DA Carson)*
 - 1) Discipline (cf. Hebrews 12:5-12)
 - 2) Leaders of the People of God: “Genuine Christian leaders do not lead from the rear...the most mature Christian leaders want to absorb an additional share of the sufferings so that their flocks may correspondingly be spared some sufferings (cf. Colossians 1:24)
 - 3) Opposition & Persecution – this is the suffering which the Apostle Peter is referring to in our passage this morning (see v.4)
 - Suffering in their pursuit of God – as they pursue holiness and righteousness and the things of God – difficult path, but on the right path!
 - Question: What does it say about a person’s faith if they have never faced difficulties or challenges or suffering on account of their faith? What does your suffering (or lack thereof) perhaps reflect about how active your faith is?
- “ceased from sin” = not stopped sinning or never sin again – but rather, “done with sin” - allegiance to Christ, no longer allegiance to sin
 - Not saying that physical suffering purifies us from our sins or frees us from sin (re: inflicting self-pain, depriving oneself of food or exposure to heat/cold as done in medieval times)
- Application: How do we “arm ourselves” with the right attitude?
 - We need our minds fixed on the Jesus, through the Word of God, Scripture, the Bible!

- V.1 starts with “Since therefore Christ suffered...” pointing us back to Jesus, what He has done for us, the Gospel, as revealed through God’s Word, the Bible!
 - **John 8:31** So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples,
 - **Psalms 119:105** Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.
- God’s Word will remind us, guide us, correct us, rebuke us, wake us up – but also acts as a mirror giving us an accurate reflection of our lives, our hearts and our attitude
 - **James 1:22–25** But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. **23** For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. **24** For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. **25** But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.
- Is your perspective and attitude Christ-like? Especially when it comes to suffering?
- Application: (v.3a) “rest of the time in the flesh” = NIV: “rest of their earthly lives” | NLT: “rest of your lives” –
 - Contrast between “human passions” (literally, “desires of men”) and “will of God”
 - Who are you following? Who or what are you living for in, “the remaining time of your life”?
 - (v.3a) “For the time that is past suffices...” = You’ve done more than your fair share of sin! What are you going to do with the rest of your life?
- Having the Attitude of Christ: Expect & prepare to suffer on account of the gospel as you follow Him

2. The Attitude of the World: Sin, Surprise & Scorn (vv.3-4)

- (cf. **Romans 8:5, Mark 8:33, John 8:23**)
- Contrast of two attitudes, two mindsets – attitude of Christ vs. attitude of the World:
 - **Romans 8:5** For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.
 - **Mark 8:33** But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”
 - **John 8:23** He said to them, “You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world
 - World – values, priorities of this world, society vs. Kingdom of God
 - “God so loved the world” = God so loved the people (world), different usage
 - “Flesh” = sometimes physical body, other times our sinful nature
- **The World Lives for Self & Misplaced Pleasures: Sin (v.3)**
- (cf. **Galatians 5:19-21, 1 Thess 4:3-4**)
- List of 6 sins: John Piper sees a possible progression here
 - Sensuality – bodily, fleshly, sinful oriented existence – one’s feelings
 - 2:11 – abstain from the passions of the flesh
 - Passions – desires (that are contrary to God’s will and His Word) – we are not called to emotionless, robotic Christians who feel nothing, have not desires or passions.
 - Drunkenness – bondage, addiction(i.e. gluttony - no self control when it comes to eating, pornography, etc. – lack of self-control
 - Orgies, drunken parties – not just individually, but whether inviting others into sin or more public or blatant (e.g., Diddy or Epstein parties)

- Just like misery loves company, sin thrives even more in company; sin always finds comfort with more sin (e.g. gossip – find others who love to gossip and complain just as much as you do)
 - Lawless idolatry – outright defiance against God; refusing to acknowledge God; giving God the middle finger
 - Sin is missing the mark, falling short of the standard, disobeying God’s commands
 - This entire list can also be summarized as sin = living for self, one’s own pleasure, what makes me feel good, what makes me happy...personal feelings
 - In our day and age, what feels good, what feels right = what *is* good, what *is* right
 - And who are you to tell me otherwise? Is that your mindset and attitude?
 - Misplaced Pleasures
 - Sin is often a distortion of misplaced desires
 - Peer pressure => want to be accepted in a group/community = we were created to be in community (church family), our longing to be ultimately accepted by God!
 - Ambition/Success => Want to achieve, be significant, do something meaningful = God has created us to strive for things that ultimately matter, His Kingdom & we are significant when we turn to Him and find meaning from Him!
 - Lust, Pornography => Intimacy = God has created us to for intimacy, physically in the context of commitment and marriage between one man and one woman, but also relationally in friendships as a church family.
 - People who struggle with lust and pornography often don’t have intimate friends – are lonely and lack emotional and social intimacy/connection with others
 - **Expect to be Slandered by the World: Rejection (v.4)**
 - **(cf. John 15:18-20)**
 - As we follow Jesus, and walk in His ways, grow in Christ-likeness, and pursue holiness...just like Christ we will slandered, ridiculed, mocked and rejected by the world = “surprised” “maligned”
 - **John 15:18–20** “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. **19** If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. **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...”
 - Context of 1 Peter Persevering as Faithful Exiles – feeling the dissonance, the tension of being and living in the world, but not of the world. As “minorities” in a majority culture and world that doesn’t see sin as sin and calls holiness “weird” or “sin.”
 - This Christ-like attitude costs us in the form of rejection from the world.
- 3. The Verdict of God: Judgment & Life (vv.5-6)**
- **Judgement on the World (v.5)**
 - **(cf. Romans 14:10, Rev 20:11-12, John 3:18, Matthew 25:46, 10:28)**
 - Feelings of rejection => judged by others (the world)...
 - “But” (v.5) there is a judgment (a verdict) that is more important – and a verdict that is final and overrides any other judgment – whether the court of the world or any other individual
 - “living and the dead” = merism (e.g. “heaven and the earth,”) and/or also referring to Christ’s return -- judgment on both those still alive when Christ returns and those who have died
 - Because of this, we can leave vengeance and justice to God

- **Romans 14:10** Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God;
- **Matthew 25:46** And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.
- **Matthew 10:28** And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.
- US Court System: District Court, Court of Appeals, Supreme Court
 - The Supreme Court of God overrules any lower worldly court's judgment or ruling
- **Grace & Life Eternal for Gospel-believers (v.6)**
- **(cf. John 5:24, Romans 8:1, John 11:25-26)**
- "For" – the Apostle Peter concludes his train of thought here
- Confusing verse: "Gospel preached to those who are dead" (cf. 1 Peter 3:19 – "spirits in prison")
 - Central issue: Who are the dead here: Non-Christians? Christians?
 - If it's referring to non-Christians, in other words, those who died who do not believe in Jesus, and now get a "final" chance to turn back to God -- goes against the whole flow and argument that Peter is making of encouraging those who are suffering that God will judge and have justice on those who persecute them.
 - Nice sentiment – but unbiblical
 - Rather referring to Christians who are (now) dead: the gospel *was* preached to them (past-tense) before they died. While they were judged and ridiculed by men while alive ("judged in the flesh," they are now alive (living) in the spirit with God.
 - NIV: "For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to human standards in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit."
 - CSB: "For this reason the gospel was also preached to those who are now dead, so that, although they might be judged in the flesh according to human standards, they might live in the Spirit according to God."
- How are those who were dead alive in spirit?
 - By how much they accomplished while alive?
 - By how compassionate they were towards others while alive?
 - By how generous and selfless they were while alive?
 - By how much they sacrificed of themselves for their family and relatives while alive?
 - By how much of the Bible they read or how much they served in the church while alive?
- No! Not karma -- always wondering if the good outweigh the bad or not, or if we've done enough
 - No, not even a distorted version of "Christian Karma"
 - If I'm good, God will bless me and forgive me and reward me with life eternal
 - I'm forgiven and God loves me because I didn't look at porn this past week.
- Those that are dead and are alive in spirit (with God)...solely because of the Gospel – the good news of Jesus and what He accomplished on the cross as a sacrifice for our sin
 - When they stand before God the judge, they understood they weren't good enough.
 - I don't deserve your mercy, I am not good enough – but Jesus is good, and I claim Him. He's my defense.
 - While you and I were still sinners, Christ died for us. Christ paid the penalty and consequence of sin so that we might avoid the wrath and judgment of God, be forgiven, made righteous and live eternally with Him because He died for us!
 - The beauty of grace – the scandal of grace.

- **John 5:24** Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.
- **Romans 8:1** There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
- **John 11:25–26** Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, **26** and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”
 - It’s hope – the attitude that costs in the form of suffering in this present life and world– but saves us!
 - It’s not only the hope, but the truth and assurance that we have as we strive to follow Jesus in this life!

Big Idea: When you live for Jesus, expect rejection from the world -- but rest in God’s final verdict.

Reflection Questions

- **How does the Gospel shape your attitude and perspective? What other things shape your mind and heart? What are specific ways you can make God's Word more a factor in your life?**
- **As you reflect on your life (attitude and way of life) who -- or what -- are you living for? In what ways are – or aren’t – you keeping the judgment of God and eternity in mind?**
- **Are there things you need to confess and repent of in which you’ve followed the ways of the world, your own desires and/or sin? Don’t wait – come to God today!**
- **In what ways have you “suffered” for the gospel or on account of your faith in Jesus as you try to seek and follow Him?**
- **Parent Corner: What are some ways you can prepare your child(ren) to suffer for Christ? What is your attitude on suffering for your child(ren)? In what ways might you be overprotecting them from gospel realities?**