

Turn in your Bible tonight to 1 Peter Chapter 4. We will be looking at verses 7 through 11 tonight. As we get closer to celebrating Christmas, the celebration that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to earth, as a baby, leaving his throne in heaven, putting on human flesh for one and only one reason. That reason? What we learned several weeks ago. *1 Peter 3:18, “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.”*

The wonderful and amazing historic event of Jesus coming was prophesied by the prophet Isaiah 700 years before Jesus came. We read this in Isaiah Chapter 9 verses 6 and 7.

***Isaiah 9:6-7***

***6 For to us a child is born to us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Might God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.***

Remember the Jews knew of the prophecies of the Messiah to come. Everything they were doing through the Law was in anticipation of the coming Savior. Did they know the day the Messiah was coming? No! Did they wake up each day thinking, “Maybe today!”

As I mentioned, 700 years after the prophecy we just read, the Messiah did come, and it is Jesus of Nazareth.

In Galatians Chapter 4 verses 4 and 5 the Bible tells us this about that prophecy.

***Galatians 4:4-5***

***4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption of sons.***

So, Jesus came, he lived a sinless life, performed many miracles, taught with authority to prove who he is. Jesus died on the cross for our sins but three days later rose from the grave and ascended to God the Father to show that the payment for sin was paid and that anyone who would repent and believe upon the Lord Jesus would be saved from their sins.

But there was another prophecy right before Jesus’ death, resurrection, and ascension back to heaven to show that he paid for the sins of mankind, that he would return to take all those that did repent and believe in him back to heaven with him. This prophecy came from Jesus Christ himself.

***John 14:1-6***

***1 “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. 4 And you know the way to where I am going.” 5 Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” 6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”***

Now think about this for a moment. The fact that Jesus promised he was coming back and that this was being taught by the Apostles. Would it not stand to reason that those that were saved were expecting Jesus' return any day? That they should be living in a way in anticipation of Jesus return?

Would it not stand to reason for us today, knowing all the prophecies of the Messiah to come in the Old Testament were fulfilled by Jesus Christ. Knowing the promise from Jesus, that he would return. Would it not stand to reason for us to live in a way in anticipation of Jesus return?

Peter, being led by the Holy Spirit writes down some very basic and practical ways to be living our life as believers, in obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ and in anticipation of Jesus' return. Let's read our verses.

### ***1 Peter 4:7-11***

***<sup>7</sup> The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. <sup>8</sup> Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. <sup>9</sup> Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. <sup>10</sup> As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: <sup>11</sup> whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.***

First of all, the end of all things began at the time of Jesus' birth. Because of his birth, then the promise of his return was put into motion. As we already covered, think about it yourself. If you were told that Jesus is coming back? Would not the first thought be that this could happen soon?

As I have lived 59 years, 2 months, 8 days, 12 hours, 3 minutes, 50 seconds, 51, 52, 53 ..... I have heard in my lifetime, many believers say this, "The way things are going, Jesus has got to be coming back soon!" Many of us are saying that right now, aren't we?

What did Jesus tell us about his return though? Matthew 24:36, Jesus said,

### ***Matthew 24:36***

***<sup>36</sup> But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.***

But Jesus did say this!

### ***Matthew 24:44***

***<sup>44</sup> Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.***

The key wording? Be Ready!!!

This thought did come to my mind though. When we have to wait for a long time for something, what can happen sometimes? You are saying, I don't know, why don't you tell me. I believe I will! We can become delusional and impatient, and we become weary. When that happens Satan can discourage us and we can fall into trying to build our kingdom instead of God's kingdom.



What is wrong with it? It is out of focus. What can we do to stay in focus? Let's go through our verses. Now we are going to go through these very quickly.

### **Be Self-Controlled and Sober minded.**

To be disciplined. Not only in body but spirit as well. In 1 Corinthians Chapter 9 verses 24 to 27 the Apostle Paul talks about all runners that run in a race run for a prize but only one gets the prize. The one who finishes first. Paul says that every athlete exercises self-control and they do that to win a perishable wreath. The prize we are seeking or running towards is imperishable, undefiled, unfading in heaven kept by God for us.

The Apostle Paul says this in verses 26 and 27.

#### ***1 Corinthians 9:26-27***

***<sup>26</sup> So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. <sup>27</sup> But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.***

As Paul would be addressing the church in Corinth in these verses, he uses these analogies because the people of Corinth would be very familiar with these because of their own Isthmian Games that were held every two years. These were sporting events of footraces, wrestling, boxing, throwing a javelin, horse and chariot racing, and even singing competition. All these events were performed in a stadium, a theater and hippodrome made specifically for the chariot races.

We have talked about this time after time when it comes to the idea of athletics. An athlete must train and discipline themselves to be prepared for the race or the competition ahead. These athletes during the Isthmian games had to follow the rules in training and in the events or they were disqualified.

So, it is with us in a Spiritual way, that we discipline our lives through Bible Study, Prayer, assembling together to grow in the knowledge and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Peter 3:18, to stir each other up to good works, Hebrews 10:25-27.

In Romans 12:1-2, ***“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present you bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”***

This goes back to what Matthew taught a few weeks ago in the fact that we die! To die to ourselves, we die to our sin and in turn we do everything out of a love and a thanksgiving for what the Lord Jesus has done for us.

Our lives are a witness to our professing Jesus Christ as our Lord and if it doesn't match up to the truth of God's Word then we become a stumbling block and the Apostle Paul said that if I don't live what I preach then I am disqualified to be a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ.

In verse 7 of what we just read, Peter says, we are to be self-controlled, sober-minded for the sake of our prayers. How many of you want your prayers answered? Ladies and Gentlemen, the Lord is not obligated in anyway to answer our prayers if we are living in obstinate, known sin, in that we shun the conviction of the Holy Spirit and do not repent and turn from those sins.

Pride, the sexual immorality, the slander, the hatred, the judgmental attitudes, the impure motives in our service, the apathy to obeying the Word of God. Our prayers are hindered by our sin!

As Paul encouraged these dispersed Christians that are being persecuted by their faith, to be self-controlled (disciplined) and sober-minded, let this one thing be the center of it all.

## **LOVE**

Read verse 8 with me.

### ***1 Peter 4:8***

***<sup>8</sup> Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.***

When I, Pastor Kevin, Katie, and Kandace use to go to Ethiopia, we would circle up with all who were there and we would sing this song. This is one stanza of this song.

***We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord  
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord  
And we pray that our unity will one day be restored  
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love  
Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love***

Americans and Ethiopians, right? No! Brothers and Sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ! Brothers and Sisters in Christ with one goal and one purpose. To see people saved and to live for the Lord Jesus until they die or Jesus returns.

Jesus covered the love we as believers are to have for each other extensively as documented by the Apostle John in the Gospel of John. In the Upper Room after the disciples and Jesus had finished the Passover meal, Jesus shares these words with his disciples.

### ***John 13:34-35***

***<sup>34</sup> A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.***

When you love people, what happens? You think more of them than yourself! But you also look at them as a soul that is standing before you, a soul that is either going to Heaven or Hell. This love is described in verse 8 as a love that covers a multitude of sins. There are several points to make here.

First, love does not condone sin. In Romans 5:8 the Bible tells us that, “**God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**” Because God condoned sin? No, God hates sin but he loved us, knowing that we can not save ourselves through our works or any other way. So, to give us salvation through repentance of sin and surrendering our lives to the Lord Jesus, God poured his wrath and the death we deserve upon his Son on the cross, and that he died and rose again the third day and is at the right hand of the Father right now in victory over sin, death, and the grave.

So, that is one way that love covers a multitude of sins. Jesus shed the blood that covers our sin if we repent and surrender our lives to him in obedience, loving him and his commandments.

This love that covers a multitude of sins also works in our relationship with each other. You may say, “How so?” You may know of a sin or hear of a sin a brother or sister in Christ is in or committed. We don’t now go gather a group together and say, “Have you heard about Dale? Oh, bless his heart! I heard ..... I’m not gossiping I just want us to pray for him!”

We are to go one on one! We are to go in an encouraging way to win back our brother and sister. Making sure we look at the plank in our eye before we look at their speck. We are not to tear each other apart!

Again, we don’t condone sin, but this a place where people should find the truth to know they need to repent and brought into the kingdom of God and be loved into how to live for the Lord Jesus.

Another point is this. What did Peter call the people he is writing to at the beginning of this letter?

### ***Elect exiles of the Dispersion***

These are Christians being persecuted for their faith in the Lord Jesus. Some with their very lives. Jesus said in his Sermon on the Mount these words.

### ***Matthew 5:43-44***

***<sup>43</sup> You have heard that it was said, “You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.” <sup>44</sup> But I say, “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”***

This does not mean we are to be a doormat or don’t do anything to protect yourself. But always be mindful that even in the persecution there is a soul standing across from you and if they do not repent, they will spend eternity in Hell. I don’t wish that on my worst enemy.

Be mindful, though we may go through persecution, Jesus went through it first. Jesus went through the slander, the hatred, the lies, the beatings, the death. Jesus’ death and resurrection brings salvation and eternal life to all who repent and believe upon his name.

Our death does not save anyone. But what if we are living so in love with the Lord Jesus, that if we were to die someone may get saved. The Lord uses our death to draw someone to repentance. I had to get right with the Lord before I said this. As I was writing this, that came to my mind, and I told the Lord. Lord if by my death it would bring one person to repentance and faith in you, I am willing.

Just like the Apostle Paul said in Philippians, “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.” I paraphrase but Paul also said that if I live that is more fruitful labor for me and if it is more necessary to you, then I will stay. Either way. Glory to God!

That is what our lives should be doing. Giving Glory to God! God has given us all gifts. The next few verses mention those. We are going to go through these real fast. Look at verses 9 to 11.

***1 Peter 3:9-11***

***<sup>9</sup> Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. <sup>10</sup> As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: <sup>11</sup> whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.***

In 1 Corinthians Chapter 12 the Church, big C, is described as a body.

***1 Corinthians 12:12-13***

***<sup>12</sup> For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup> For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews, or Greeks, slaves or free --- and all were made to drink of one Spirit.***

In a physical sense if one part of our body is hurting the whole body suffers. So, it is with the body of Christ. If one is hurting then we surround that person, we encourage. But also in the same since, if one person is not performing their function in the gift that God has given us, then the body of Christ suffers as well.

You may say, I don't know what my gift is. Let me help with that. There are two specific gifts God has given each of us.

- 1. To be his witness (Acts 1:8), to be his ambassador (2 Corinthians 5:20)***
- 2. Servant – By serving God and serving our brothers and sisters in Jesus***

How do we do that? What we learned from verse 8. Look at the screens one last time.

***1 Peter 4:8***

***<sup>8</sup> Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.***



Staying Focused and not let the cross get blurry in our site.



But let the cross be in clear in our view as we look to Jesus!