

INTRODUCE **SLIDE** 1 PETER

So, if you have your Bibles, and I hope you do,

- please grab them and turn to 1 Peter chapter 4.
- You can open a phone or a tablet to 1 Peter 4,
- or you can use one of the hard-backed black bibles
 - under every single chair.
 - You'll find 1 Peter 4 on page **1015**.

INTRODUCTION

Hey y'all,

- we are two months into our study
- through the book of 1 Peter,
- and we have one more month left.

And last week,

- one of our elders,
 - Eric Shelly,
- did a great job of preaching to the end of chapter 3
- specifically on preparing to suffer.

He said that...

- we can expect to suffer,
 - in fact,
- it may even be God's will for us to suffer at times.

So, we had better be prepared for it.

And today, Peter picks right up where he left off last week...

So, look at our text. 1 Peter 4 starting in verse 1:

1 PETER 4:1

[1] Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,

EXPLAIN: TWO THEREFORES

Now, we've gotta handle this correctly, or it can be confusing.

We see the transition word *therefore* in verse 1.

And I want you to look down to verse 7...it says:

- The end of all things is at hand; *therefore*...

So, we've got two *therefores* in this passage.

Now, I wasn't raised in the church,

- and thus, I really didn't know how to study my Bible...
- until a couple years after becoming a Christian, in college.

And one professor I had used to say,

- *"Whenever you see a therefore in the text,*
- *always ask what it's there for!"*

And that's cheesy, but it has never left me.

Never go past a *therefore* without stopping and asking about it.

- Because every *therefore*...
- immediately teaches us...
- that there is a cause and effect going on.

Everytime you see a *therefore* in the Bible,

- what you can know is that...
 - what I'm about to tell you...
 - is based on the nature...
 - of what I just told you.

EXPLAIN: INDICATIVE/IMPERATIVE

And we've already seen this back in 1 Peter chapter 1.

You remember I taught you about the difference

- between an INDICATIVE
- and an IMPERATIVE?

Remember this grammar lesson.

- The INDICATIVE mood is used to state facts.
 - INDICATIVES are about what God...
 - has done,
 - or is doing,
 - or will do.
 - They're statements.
- IMPERATIVES are commands.
 - Imperatives are what we should do.

And the Bible always starts with the INDICATIVE.

- **The Bible always starts with what God has done.**
- **Before it ever moves to what we should do!**

God created man and woman first...AND THEN told them to multiply.

God rescued Israel from Egypt first...AND THEN gave them the law.

God saves us from our sin first...AND THEN tells us to start obeying him.

- It's always moving from INDICATIVE to IMPERATIVE...
 - **BELIEF precedes BEHAVIOR.**

And so, back to our text,

- what's the INDICATIVE?

And then, based on that...

- what's the IMPERATIVE? The command?

Well, let's look at verse 1 again:

1 PETER 4:1a

[1] Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh,

So, there's the INDICATIVE...

- Jesus **suffered in the flesh**...that is, the crucifixion!
 - That's the fact.
 - That's the belief.
 - He suffered physically...
 - He suffered emotionally...
 - He suffered spiritually...
 - He was abandoned...
- Because **Christ suffered**...*therefore*...

1 PETER 4:1b-2

arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, [2] so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God.

POINT: STOP

I think Peter has one main IMPERATIVE for us today...

- You see, because Christ suffered...
- we should **SLIDE STOP SINNING**

And Peter is going to make his case about this,

- but this is what he means when he says
- **whoever has suffered in the flesh has *ceased from sin*.**

He's saying,

- *"if you are in the midst of suffering,*
 - *you need to remember that Christ suffered!*
- *SO THAT you can resist the temptation*
 - *to quit following Christ*
 - *and fall back into sin."*

That's what **whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin** means.

EXPLAIN: PATHS

So, the idea here is that there are two paths to choose from:

- The path of obedience,
- or the path of sin.

You can live out your life for two things, verse 2 says:

- human passions...
- OR the will of God.

And in suffering,

- we have the choice of being obedient to Christ,
- OR sinning as a means of escaping suffering.

CONTEXT: TEMPTATION

So think about it,

- in Peter's context,
- the real temptation for his readers
- was to sin by denying Christ.

Remember a few weeks ago...

- when we talked about the persecution of Christians...
 - by the Roman Emperor Nero?
- These Christians were under dire persecution,
- and the temptation was very real for them to deny Christ,
 - and just get back to living their pagan lifestyles...
- to avoid their suffering and persecution.

Now, that may not be a one-to-one correlation for us today.

But let me tell you,

- the temptation to choose sin...
- to get out of suffering...
- is very real for us, too.

APPLICATION

The path you choose...

the direction you go...

- toward obedience...
- or toward sin...

is of the utmost importance!

Because **DIRECTION DETERMINES DESTINATION.**

- You are headed in a direction,
- and that direction leads somewhere.
 - Is it toward **human passions**...
 - or towards **the will of God**?

Your DIRECTION DETERMINES your DESTINATION.

FINANCIAL

You're going in a financial DIRECTION...and it has a DESTINATION.

- And if I ask you,
 - *"In 10 years, where do you want to be financially?"*
- Most people would say,
 - *"I want to be stable..."*
 - *and secure...*
 - *able to provide for my family...*
 - *able to be generous!"*
- I don't know anyone in here who would reply,
 - *"In 10-years I want to be broke!"*
 - *Just up to my neck in debt."*

But some of you are going that DIRECTION.

RELATIONAL

Relationally, you're going in a DIRECTION.

- When I used to talk to college guys...
 - not our good college dudes here at Fathom...
- but guys on the edge...I'd often ask,
 - *"Hey, in 10-years where do you want to be relationally?"*
- They would respond with a description of love...
 - that's akin to a romance movie.
 - Like, Romeo and Juliet, stuff!

But when asked, *"ok, what are you doing to get there?"*

- They were like,
 - *"Hey man, right now I'm just playing the field!"*
 - *I'm young...give me some time!"*

It's like they think it's just gonna magically happen!

- Like, just one day they're gonna put a rental tux on,
- and show up at church to stand next to me,
- and a father is gonna hand his little girl off to him...
- to become husband-of-the-year.

Listen buddy...that ain't how it works!

You're going in a DIRECTION...

- and it's taking you somewhere...
- but it ain't there.

FITNESS

Ladies, I'm seeing this more and more,

- but there's this fitness-mid-life-crisis thing going on,
 - where you're trying so desperately...
 - to find your identity in how you look.

And listen, you look great...you do...you look great!

- And I'm all for fitness and good health!
- Get after it!

But hear me:

- this is about as good as it gets!
- It ain't getting much better.
 - And you can tweak it,
 - and work out,
 - and crunch it,
 - and try to meet your reunion goal, or whatever.
- But I'm just telling you,
 - time and gravity are gonna win in the end!

I'm telling you,

- the DIRECTION of valuing youthful beauty...
- above all else...
- leads somewhere.

Instead you ought to get on a course...

- where your value is in who God says you are...
 - not in what you look like.

MARRIAGE

If you're married, you're going in a DIRECTION.

- You don't just accidentally frolic your way over...
 - to deep,
 - abiding,
 - self-sacrificing love for one another.

That's a DIRECTION.

AFFAIRS

If you're flirting with someone at work...that's a DIRECTION.

- I know people who are heartbroken over a divorce,
- and it started as innocently as,
 - *"Well, it's just a lunch.*
 - *He's my work friend.*
 - *She gets me.*
 - *There's nothing sinful about having lunch."*

But it's a DIRECTION.

PORN

You don't think pornography's a DIRECTION?

- It'll kill your intimacy.
- It'll numb your soul.
 - I've seen it!

For men and for women!

TRANSITION

And I'm not just preaching to you, ok?

- I've gotten myself there...
- I've found myself wondering,
 - *"God, how did I get here?"*
 - *How did this happen?"*

I'll tell you about that in a minute...

But Peter is saying: STOP SINNING.

Please take this seriously!

He goes on in verse 3:

1 PETER 4:3

[3] For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry.

EXPLAIN

See, he's reminding them

- of the DIRECTION they used to be going...
- of who they used to be.

They were living these lives of licentiousness.

They were doing whatever they wanted!

But Peter says: **that time is past!**

Hey, Christian...

- You don't HAVE to keep doing the SAME THINGS you did...
- Because YOU are no longer the SAME PERSON you were.

That's not who you are anymore!

And God has called you to...and given you the power to STOP SINNING.

Verse 4:

1 PETER 4:4

[4] With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you;

EXPLAIN: MALIGN

Hey, the crew of folks you ran with before you started following Christ...

- they might not understand...
- why you wouldn't do these things anymore.

Now, some might just be confused by you...

- But some people will be defensive around your change...
- they might **malign you**.

And then maybe, here come the little stabs at you...

- *"Oh, you're a Christian now, huh?"*
- *So, no more fun for us, huh?*
- *Are you a part of that Fathom cult,*
 - *with your car stickers,*
 - *and your animal shirts?*

Or they might even get mean,

- *“So, does this mean that you’re a racist now?”*
- *Are you a homophobe now that you’re a Christian?*
- *You gonna start judging me?”*

It could go that way.

Hey listen, in my 20-years since becoming a Christian...it has for me.

- From friends AND family...
- misunderstanding AND maligning.

Verse 5:

1 PETER 4:5

[5] but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

EXPLAIN: JUDGMENT

They malign you...

- because they don’t have a hope...
- that goes beyond this world.

So naturally, they try to get the most out of this world:

- Feel good.
- Chase your dreams.
- Make the most of what you have.
- Do what you want.
- Spend all your money on yourself and your children.
- Make a bucket list.

What else is there but earthly happiness?

And when you don't live that way,

- It can disturb them,
 - because it tells them...
 - the whole basis of their life is off.

But they will be judged...just like you will.

- Both Christians and non-Christians...
- will give an account for how they lived.

So, Peter is saying:

- *"Don't go back to that life!"*
 - It would be foolish for Christians...
 - to relapse into a pagan lifestyle,
 - even though they currently face hostility and criticism.

And then verse 6 can be confusing.

1 PETER 4:6

[6] For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does.

EXPLAIN: DOESN'T MEAN

Now, this verse is misunderstood...

So, first, let me tell you what this doesn't mean.

- This verse does not mean that someone went
- and preached the gospel to people after they were dead
- and they all got a second chance.

That would be against the whole point of this passage!

Peter's whole point is to tell these people NOT to indulge sin.

- He's not telling them
 - *"Don't worry; if you DO sin a bunch...*
 - *you'll have a second chance after you die."*

No, Hebrews 9:27 is clear.

- And just as it is appointed for man to die once,
- and after that comes judgment,

There is no second chance.

EXPLAIN: DOES MEAN

So, I think, in context, the best way to understand those who are dead

- is that it refers back to Christians in their pre-saved state.

So, it means that the gospel was preached to us...

- when we were dead...
 - while we were yet sinners.
- And because of that gospel,
 - physical death...and even judgment,
- is not the last word for Christians.

TRANSITION

So, what Peter is saying is,

- *"Hey, since Christ suffered the cross in your place...*
- *therefore...STOP SINNING!*
 - *Don't go back to those things!*
 - *Cause this life isn't all there is."*

And that's what transitions us to the second therefore in this text.

Verse 7.

1 PETER 4:7a

[7] The end of all things is at hand; therefore...

EXPLAIN: THE END

So, remember the INDICATIVE/IMPERATIVE thing from verse 1?
Well, here's the second INDICATIVE...

- The first was that CHRIST HAS SUFFERED.
- the second is that THE END IS NEAR.

So, why should we STOP SINNING?

Because Christ died AND because the return of Christ is imminent;

- it's coming soon,
- and it could happen at any minute,
- and that should change how you live.

Now you say,

- *"Wait a minute...wasn't this written almost 2000 years ago!*
- *How could Peter have thought Jesus' return was imminent...*
- *if we're still 2000 years and waiting?"*

And many people have taken verses like this one...

- to say that the New Testament writers...
- mistakenly predicted that Jesus was coming back...
- in their lifetime.

They scoff and they say,

- *"See, the Apostles were wrong.*
- *Jesus didn't come back...*
- *and He's not coming back!"*

But Peter doesn't say he's coming back in his lifetime.

This isn't some sort of end-times prediction.

ILLUSTRATION

There was a book that came out in the late 80s called

SLIDE *“88 Reasons Why the Rapture Will Be In 1988”*

It predicted Jesus’ second-coming...

specifically, on September 11th, 12th, or 13th of 1988.

- It was a huge seller...
- it sold more than 2 million copies in the space of mere months.

By the way, I do love the fact that there is an expanded version.

And people pushed back, by saying,

- *“Hey, no one knows the day or the hour of Christ’s return.”*

And the author responded,

- *“I don’t know the day or the hour...”*
- *I just know the week.*

Is this what Peter’s doing?

- Is he the end of the world guy!
- Repent for the end is near?
- That crazy guy with a sign at the Broncos game?

Suffice it to say,

- September of 1988 came and went,
- and the world did not, in fact, end.

But interestingly enough,

- the same guy came out with a book the next year,
- claiming that he was simply off in his calculations.
- And the title of that book:
 - 89 Reasons Why Jesus Will Return in 1989.
- Understandably, it didn’t sell quite as many copies.

APPLICATION

This isn't what Peter's doing...

- and it shouldn't be what we do...
- with the end times and Christ's return.

Peter isn't predicting WHEN the end is coming...

- Peter is emphatically telling them to LIVE AS IF...
- the end was coming.

He's telling them to **SLIDE STOP SINNING**...

Because he doesn't know when Jesus is coming back...

- and neither do we,
 - it could be at any minute,
- but it is "at hand."

So, the end is near...back to verse 7

1 PETER 4:7b-11

therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.

[8] Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a

multitude of sins. [9] Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.

[10] As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good

stewards of God's varied grace: [11] 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.

TRANSITION

Now, gosh, I could preach a whole other sermon on these verses...

- and the way they command us...
- to serve one another in light of the Gospel.

But for the sake of time, let me point you to the end of verse 11:

- in order that in everything...
- God may be glorified through Jesus Christ

The reason why we work to put our sin to death...to STOP SINNING.

And the reason why Christians serve and love and show hospitality...

- is all to bring glory to God!

CONCLUSION

Now, here's how I'd like to end today.

- I doubt if anyone is shocked that today,
 - at a church,
 - from a preacher,
- you're hearing the message that you should...
- STOP SINNING.
 - In fact, I don't know that there is a MORE on-point...
 - message from a Christian preacher.

But my hunch is some of you are saying to yourselves,

- *"Chris, that's easy for you to say, but you're a pastor..."*
- *and that whole STOP SINNING thing...it's hard.*
 - *Gosh, I'd love to stop sinning,*
 - *but I've just got some stuff that I'm wrestling with.*
 - *Stuff that I'm struggling with.*
 - *And I just can't seem to get past it.*

- *And if you knew...*
 - *if anyone knew...*
- *I'd be tossed out.*
- *I'd be judged.*
- *I'd be kicked to the curb."*

But I told you earlier that I've gotten there myself...

I've been in the place wondering,

- *"God, how did I get here?"*
- *How did this happen?"*

ILLUSTRATION: 2019

Now, I've shared this story a number of times from this stage...

Almost 5-years-ago, in 2019, I was in an elders meeting.

- Our church had just turned 4-years-old,
- and in that elders meeting the guys informed me...
- that someone had accused me of plagiarizing
- portions of some of my recent sermons.

And the elders confronted me on it...and I confessed.

I told the guys,

- *"Yeah. It's true.*
 - *I should've given credit.*
 - *I should've said who that stuff was from.*
 - *I shouldn't be doing that."*

Well, by the next morning the gossip mill had done its work...

- and there were multiple people calling...
- for my immediate termination...
- as the Lead Pastor of this church.

And it was as if the bottom of the pit of my stomach just dropped out.

- I didn't know if I was gonna lose my job.
- I didn't know if I was gonna lose my church.
- I didn't know if I was gonna lose all my friends.
- I didn't know if I would ever get to pastor again.
- I didn't know how I would provide for my family.

I was just in a tail-spin.

- *"God, how did I get here?"*
- *How did this happen?"*

And it took me months of prayer, and processing, and counseling...

- to even figure out all of what had built up in my life...
- to get me to that place!

But the wake of mess...that my sin caused...was huge!

- I was put on a nine-month church discipline process.
- More than half of our church left...
 - some, because of what I'd done...
 - others, because of what others did...
 - in light of what I'd done.
- We were put in a financially precarious situation as a church.
 - Gosh, if it didn't almost blow this whole thing up.
- Literally, Fathom Church almost just closed up shop.

Now, while I've talked about this numerous times...

- there's one part I don't think I've ever shared.

I talked with one of our elders right in the midst of all the mess.

- And he was trying to encourage me...
- that I was going to make it through this.

And I said:

- *“Man, how is our church ever going to recover from this?”*
 - *How am I ever going to recover from this?!?*
- *Who is ever gonna want to come listen to...*
 - *the plagiarist pastor again?”*

And he said something I won't forget. He said:

- *“Chris, if this church isn't a place of redemption...*
 - *even for you...*
- *then it deserves to close.*
- ***We don't shoot our wounded.”***

ENDING

Hey church, look at me... **SLIDE W/PADS STOP SINNING**

It has horrible consequences.

For you, and for everyone around you!

You say, *“How? How do I stop?”*

Hey...out yourself.

The biblical word is: confess. Confess your sin.

- *“Well, I don't know if I can handle...*
- *what people will think if I confess.”*

Hey, that day with the elders...

- was the worst day in my ministry life!

AND...

- **it was the beginning...**
- **of me finding...**
- **a freedom and grace...**
- **like I'd never experienced before!**

You listen to me:

- Fathom is a place where it's ok not to be ok.
- It's just not ok to stay there.
 - Even for me.
 - Even for the pastor.
- This place HAS TO be a safe place to NOT be ok...
- or we should close shop.

We don't shoot our wounded!

- But listen, it's not ok to stay there.

Sometimes the greatest gift God will give us...
is to bring us to the end of ourselves.

You gotta confess.

REFLECTION

So, where are you at today?

- You hiding some stuff?
- You feeling some guilt?
- You feeling shame?
- You tired of that stuff?
- If you've got some stuff you need to get off your chest...
 - Hey, you come.
- If you've got some sin you're still running to...
 - You come.
- Maybe you've never actually admitted you are a sinner...
- and you need Jesus to save you!
 - You come.

You confess that stuff.

It's why we have people every Sunday to pray with.

- It's ok not to be ok.
- Just don't stay there.

That time of your sin is past!

It's time to live for the will of God!

Let's pray.

RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – fathomchurch.org/give
- PRAYER - fathomchurch.org/prayer
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

RESOURCES CONSULTED:

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- Jobes, Karen H.. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. 1 Peter.
- Keller, Tim. *Life In Christ's Body*.
- Schreiner, Thomas R. The New American Commentary. 1, 2 Peter, Jude.