

Be Sober & Watchful House of Praise

Introduction

Thank you, Pastor & team, for your hospitality and kindness.

We believe God is moving mightily in the nations of the world! We are living in times of uncertainty and there is a great need to position ourselves as we walk out our life for Jesus!

In Him we live and move and have our being. (Acts17:28)

If you have your Bibles or phones, please turn to:

1 Peter 4:7-11

But the end of all things is at hand; therefore, be serious and watchful in your prayers. ⁸And above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.” *Be* hospitable to one another without grumbling. As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. NKJV

Peter is writing to a group of believers that were under pressure from society and the culture of the day!

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They were constantly aware of the fact that the rules that governed the places where they lived were different and that they should not expect them to be the same for them.

Peter mentions 5 crucial qualities required to handle the current days pressures and the struggles we all face.

1. Be eternally minded - But the end of all things is at hand. Vs.7

He understood that in most cases these foreign lands would be a hostile environment for them and their way of life.

It should not surprise Christians, who have their citizenship in heaven, that living on earth is a place **where the rules are contrary to much of the gospel and that the world can be a hostile place for the believer.**

I believe we need to manage our expectations and realize that **the world system will never be a friendly place for believers.** Our response should not be anger but intentional faith, hope and love.

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We are strangers living in a foreign land with a mission to impact the areas we live and release the gospel of the kingdom & grace of God.

It's amazing to me how the Bible writers were aware of the limitations of their time here on the earth, they had a different perspective of what was important and needed in their day.

*Peter wasn't preaching an end times message so much as letting people know that everyone has a certain timeframe to live! **How they lived and conducted their life was crucial!***

***Hebrews 9:27** states: Everyone is appointed once to die then face the judgment!*

Peter understood that life could change quickly and decisively. He encouraged them to live with eternity in their hearts and ministry!

Acts 13:26 "Now when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his ancestors and his body decayed.

"When people realize the shortness of their time on earth, they are bound to commit themselves to a certain kind of life." Barclay

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2. Pray Fervently - Therefore, be serious and watchful in your prayers.

Be Serious – have self-control, to be in one's right mind, to preserve one's sanity.

The great characteristic of clarity is that it sees things in their proper proportions; it sees what things are important and what things are not. Barclay

Be Watchful – To be soberly vigilant; not intoxicated with worldly cares and pleasures. Moral alertness.

*The implication here is to be urgent, awake and free from anything that would **intoxicate** you from making right judgments.*

Peter's encouragement is not to let anything grab hold of our hearts that would impair our judgment in times of moral uncertainty or depravity.

Anything that would pre-occupy our thoughts and cloud our perspective must be vigorously pushed out.

Prayer is the instrument that removes anxiety, distraction and forces that would try to take control of your life.

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Prayer moves past your current understanding and guards your hearts and minds.

Philippians 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Prayer – simple devotion and conversation with God will be the buffer needed to protect and awaken your heart.

D.S Gordon said – “God shapes the world by prayer. The more praying there is in the world the better the world will be, the mightier the forces against evil...The prayers of God’s saints are the capital stock of heaven by which God carries on His great work upon the earth. God conditions the very life and prosperity of His cause on Prayer.”

In these troubling times prayer needs to be a central focus of our lives. Pray often! Pray boldly! Pray passionately!

Prayer is plural so it means many types of prayer both public and private! Fasting and prayer, personal prayer, family prayer, small group prayer & corporate prayer times, all night prayer & prayer times with intercession etc...

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I've had many different seasons & types of prayer in my personal life. Key is to keep praying! The Lord's prayer has worked as a guide for me for 35 years!

3. Love Deeply - And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."

Fervent love for one another! Stretched out and earnest love! Long lasting love. Patient love!

Fervent Love is what is needed in a growing unloving, uncaring world.

Fervent Love can bring security to those who are feeling insecure about life and wrong decisions.

Fervent love can resist the offences that seek to invade our hearts.

"Where love abounds in a fellowship of Christians, many small offences, and even some large ones, are readily overlooked and forgotten. But where love is lacking, every word is viewed with suspicion, every action is liable to misunderstanding, and conflicts about – to Satan's perverse delight." (Grudem)

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Fervent pure love can cover a multitude of sins! Peter recognizes as this world grows darker that our love for one another must go deeper and be more grace-filled.

4. *Practice Hospitality - Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.*

Peter's goal is to encourage the believer that in dark times we are not to retreat but to extend ourselves and serve our world.

We are to move ourselves further into community.

Hospitality – the opening of your resources to others!

Generosity is a gift of the heart towards those in our life with no expectation of return.

In economic turmoil we need to extend ourselves with our resources of time, talents and treasures.

The early church could not exist without hospitality and generosity!

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Opening your home and heart for a place of safety and trust in a season of shaking. i.e., Cell group meetings, spending quality time with each other.

Small acts of kindness can turn a heart of stone. Simple gestures can release the grace of God in a powerful way.

Without grumbling – to murmur, mutter

To carry on a secret debate

To have a secret displeasure not openly shared.

The Greek term denotes a muttering or low speaking as a sign of displeasure. It depicts a spirit that is the opposite of cheerfulness.” (Hiebert)

You may be sharing your things but inwardly or quietly behind the scenes you’re grumbling.

5. Use your gifts to serve others - Recognize, develop, and deploy your gift!

As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as **good stewards** of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, **let him do it as with the ability which God supplies**, that in all things **God may be glorified** through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Steward your Gifts – We all have been given gifts by the grace of God to serve one another.

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To build and encourage one another. Two specific categories - Speaking & Service!

When God gives us a gift, talent or ability, He does not want us to put it on a shelf for display purposes.

The gifts, talents and ministries that He gives to us have been entrusted and we will one day give an account on what we did with them.

We are not to let them sit idly, but we are to utilize them to the maximum in the service of God and others.

2 Timothy 1:6-7 Therefore I remind you to **stir up the gift of God** which is in you through the laying on of my hands. ⁷ For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Stir up! NT:329 - to kindle glowing embers back into a roaring fire; to ignite a flame or level or passion

William Booth – “The tendency of fire is to go out; watch the fire on the altar of your heart!”

Don't allow fear to keep you from exercising your gifts! You've been given you a Spirit of Power, love and a sound mind!

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What if you needed healing and someone here carried that gift? What if you needed wisdom? What if you needed finances? What if you needed a place to stay? Everything we need is in the house of God! ***Turn to someone and “ask do you have what I need?”***

If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies: God supplies the ability!!

You are set up for success because God give you the ability to minister. Rely upon His Spirit to empower you!

The church of Jesus should be an empowered church using every gift at its disposal to bring the nature of Jesus to a hurting world and society so that in all things God may be glorified!!

Conclusion

Every one of us will face the possibility that our end is near! If you're here today and don't know Jesus, open your heart to Him right now!

Speaking to every believer, we need to be sober and watchful in this day! I want to take time to pray into each of these areas we discussed this morning.

Have an Eternal Mindset

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House of Praise**

Prayer – Pray for those who struggle with prayer

Love for one another – Pray for a greater expression of love in our lives.

Be hospitable – Ask God where we need to be more hospitable!

Use your gift. – Pray for more ability and faith to release your gifts.