

## **HOPEFUL**

***First Peter: Standing firm in the hope and encouragement of the grace of God***

***Lesson Title: Arm Yourself***

### Introduction

1. There is a close connection between this section and the preceding section. The preceding section deals with Christ as an example of suffering unjustly. Arm yourself with the same attitude as Jesus had.
2. Notice how the first six verses of chapter four flow from the previous text.
3. Peter introduces a new reason for suffering for righteousness' sake: Because we no longer practice sin.

### **THE POWER OF CHRIST'S DEATH**

- A. ***"Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose"*** (1).
  1. Therefore, is a word of summary that connects what the author is about to say with what he had just said.
  2. What he has just said is found in 3:18, 22.
  3. Peter is saying we should arm ourselves with this same mindset.
  4. ***"Arm yourselves"*** is a word used to describe a *heavily armed foot soldier*.
- B. The word picture is a blunt reminder that there is a battle raging. Christ not only died to conquer sin but to equip us for battle.
- C. As a result of the relationship we have with Christ, we share His victory. Verses 1-3 catalog these rewards.
- D. Notice the contrast between ***"the will of God"*** in verse 2 and the ***"desire of the Gentiles"*** in verse 3.
  1. Christ fills the void left from all the garbage we filled our lives with.
  2. Emptiness is gone and we no longer crave.

3. This is where we are different from the world.
- E. Why do we love powerful weapons?
1. Because we know the world is a field of battle.
  2. Peter wants to make us dangerous to our enemies.
- F. The weapons Peter wants us to be armed with are not aimed at flesh and blood.

### **ARM YOURSELF WITH THE SAME WAY OF THINKING**

- A. It is evident in verse 1 that Peter is urging us to be willing to “**suffer for righteousness’ sake.**”
1. In other words, our top priority is righteousness and everything else is secondary.
  2. Christians are champions of righteousness.
- B. Why should we suffer for refusing to participate in the world’s sins?
1. By not participating we send a message of condemnation.
  2. We are teachers of righteousness (as Paul teaches in Ephesians 5:11,12).
  3. The suffering for righteousness’ sake has already begun.
  4. Brace yourself.
- C. How are we to answer for our stance against these sins?
1. We must understand the mindset of the unbeliever.
  2. “**...they are surprised when you do not join them.**” They are completely ignorant of any absolute lines concerning what we can do with our bodies.
  3. What God has defined as sin is commonly renamed in order to make the sin more palatable.
  4. Verse four is a good gauge as to whether we are truly done with sin. If the world isn’t surprised with our morals, maybe we are compromising.

## **EQUIPPED FOR WAR**

- A. The main point Peter wants us to grab: Arm yourself with **a joy that death cannot quench** and arm yourself with a **compass bearing to direct your heart.**
1. This is all in verse 1.
  2. What suffering of Christ is Peter referring to? The answer is at 3:18.
  3. Where did Christ suffer in the flesh? Again 3:18.
  4. There is something about the mindset of Christ that Peter wants us to imitate. So, why did He go to Calvary?
- B. But there another verse that describes the mindset of Jesus concerning the cross.
1. ***"...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."*** Hebrews 12:2
  2. When Jesus heard the voice saying, "don't go to the cross," he said, "I must..."
- C. For the joy of salvation and its fruit, Jesus was willing to suffer death and shame.
1. That joy is the joy of fruit.
  2. It is the joy of the end, or the result of his cross.
  3. There is more joy to be had in a life shaped by suffering and subsequent glory than a life of self-protection.
- D. So, what does it mean that we are to arm ourselves with the same attitude? In every single part of life, we aim for the joy of obedience to God, trusting by faith that He is the God of Resurrection. God is not trying to take away from us when He bids us to come and die.

## **THE FRUIT OF OBEDIENCE**

That is the overriding principle of verse 1. What Peter does after that is to show us what happens as we obey it.

A. **We endanger our own sin** (1-3).

1. ***"...for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin."***
2. If we trust God's resurrecting, joy bringing work enough to die to ourselves and even suffer for Jesus' sake, that is the kind of faith that is poison to sin.
3. We cannot have that mindset and sin at the same time.
4. Sin is our enemy and verse 3 identifies a list of wells that the flesh like to drink from satisfaction.
5. This is crucial! In this war with sin, what we are not doing is never the engine that drives the Christian life. What we are not doing is not the main focus, but what we are doing.

B. **We get a Compass bearing for life** (2).

1. ***"...whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh, no longer for human passions but for the will of God."***
2. There is a thing we are not living for anymore, and a thing we are living for. We live in the body not for human passions, but for the will of God.
3. The will of God becomes the compass for everything we do.
4. Where will this compass bearing, this mind of Christ, take me?
5. The positive aim of fruitful, obedience to the will of God becomes the GPS that automatically leaves sin behind.
6. The focal point is not on the sin, but on the pursuit of love, of fruit and the will of God that drives our lives.

C. **We look fearlessly different** (4).

1. What happens, and it happens as we become the people of God in pursuit of the will of God, is that we become the **CHURCH, PECULIAR**.
2. ***“With respect to this, they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; but they will give an account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.”***
3. We are different and that is by design. The worst thing we have attempted in the last century of the American church is to try to make this thing not weird.
4. We have sought to remake the church in the image of modernism and whatever culturally relevant shape we can think of.
5. We are in the business of being bent in the shape of God, not bending God to the shape of our comfort.

D. **We will be vindicated** (5-6).

1. We understand this verse to refer to all the people to whom the gospel was preached while they were still alive on the earth and believed on the Lord. Because of their valiant stand for the truth, they suffered at the hands of wicked men. They were judged by men but vindicated by God.
2. We are advancing the kingdom of God, and the result is a clash of kingdoms. It is a collision of rival empires.
3. ***“...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.”***

## Conclusion

The Christian life is supposed to be full contact, all-in obedience to the great commission. That take risky obedience, cost-counting sacrifice, to Jesus.