



**Having a Job Moment
Gut Check Time...What is Important in our Walk?
1 Peter 4:1-11**

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This can't be good. You put Job into the title. Are we going to be talking about suffering and persecution?

Yes.



I have bad news for us as believers. Contrary to what some teach today, that Christians can have their best life right now. The Bible does not teach the same thing. Yes, we can indeed have our best life right now, in Christ. But most who grab ahold of this teaching are looking for material prosperity, health, and an easy-going life right here right now with no persecution or suffering...ever.

I really wish I could tell you that is what the Bible promises us here on this planet. We are promised anything but that.

What are you saying Ken?

I am saying that for those of us who are serious about following Jesus Christ, we will, at times, in our culture be subjected to push back and discrimination. Our message, we are all sinners in need of a savior, is not popular.

We live in the world but are not of the world. We have sworn allegiance to Jesus Christ who is not of this world. Those who are not believers are in league with the one who is currently running the world. That would be Satan. We left that side and did so publicly if you have been baptized.

We live in the Spirit, not in the flesh.

Romans 8:5–8

“For those who live according to the flesh have their outlook shaped by the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit have their outlook shaped by the things of the Spirit. For the outlook of the flesh is death, but the outlook of the Spirit is life and peace, because the outlook of the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to the law of God, nor is it able to do so. **Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.**” (NET 2nd ed.)

This makes it incredibly simple for us. There is no need to look to theories as to why, or indulge in conspiracy, unbelievers cannot ever please God...ever. Carnal Christians...ditto unless they repent.

All non-believers and many believers too, are in the flesh. They live a lifestyle that is hostile to God. As faithful believers, we live a lifestyle that is very different, we want to be pleasing to God, and that means we will not be pleasing to the world.

For many in the church it is no longer “how must we now live as believers” in this world, it is, “what can I get away with and still be considered a believer.” “What sin is a red line?”

The church needs revival, we need a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

John 15:20

“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. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.**” (ESV)

Romans 12:14

“**Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.**” (ESV)

Peter has already alluded to these promises, but here in chapter 4, he addresses the topic full on. Yes, we are blessed in Christ, but when we are being blessed by the Lord, we should never find ourselves falling into the attitude that we are owed this because we are Christians. The reality is very different.



2 Timothy 3:10–12

“You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. Indeed, **all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,**” (ESV)

Blessing for us in this country has been a general lack of persecution, but that may be changing. Christianophobia is a real thing for many in the world and now also in this nation.

1 Peter 2:20–21

“For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? **But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. For you have been called for this purpose, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you would follow in His steps,**” (NASB 2020)

Job was a man that the Lord blessed spiritually, physically and materially and Job was indeed faithful to the Lord. Satan, though, accused God of favoritism with Job and challenged Him to remove His hedge, which God did.

God is eternal and His purposes as to the why He does things is not something I am prepared to answer. We have things that take place to us as we do life. We live in a fallen world and some of this is related to that. We sin, and there are consequences as some sins also introduce diseases and accelerate other debilitating impacts. And then there are the simple issues of living in a fallen world. There are those things we now see that are the result of the fall and the stripping away of the atmospheric protections that were in place pre-flood. And then there is stuff we simply do not understand and may not until we see Jesus.

Job lost everything, his wealth, his goods, his family, and his health. He never lost his integrity though as His response to everything being taken was worship.

Job 1:20–22.

“**Then Job arose, tore his robe, shaved his head, and fell on the ground and worshiped.** He said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return there; the LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.” **In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrongdoing.**” (NRSVue)

But as Christians, we tend state, as Job’s friends did, that suffering must have a causal relationship with sinning, and that is not always the case.

A brother or sister who is undergoing testing, or dealing with a sickness, injury, or disease is not always being disciplined due to sin. Even if they were, our response should always be one of love. We live in a fallen world and but for the grace of God, there go I.

Stop looking for the demon of whatever and keep trusting in the one who made everything.

A common assumption among Christians is that every experience of suffering is caused by a specific sin. In the Bible, Job’s so-called friends and the disciples of Jesus affirmed this incorrect view. (Hindson and Ergun 2008)

Jesus would say to us that we need to love and minister to those who are suffering. Job was eventually restored by the Lord, but he never did learn the reasons for his suffering. I know from my turns with suffering and tests, I want to learn the lesson and move on.



But there are indeed those times where the lesson is simply not visible and all we hear from the Lord is, "Trust me." So, we do.

Why suffering?

If I could give you the definitive answer to that, then I could also give you a serious description of the Trinity as well and why evil exists. I can't give you an answer.

As much as I would like to have God's perspective on everything, there are some things I simply do not understand.

The Bible assures us there is an answer to pain, suffering and ultimately death itself ... but often our thinking is too human-centered, rather than God-centered, to fully appreciate it. Let us remember that the world would be in an even worse condition, if God did not restrain evil in some measure. (Powell 1999, 163)

What are some possible reasons for suffering? This is not an all-inclusive list.

Reasons for Suffering

- Punitive – But not in all cases. "Therefore God gave them over in the desires of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves." (Romans 1:24, NRSVue)
- Disciplinary – Which makes real that we are His kids. "My child, do not despise the LORD's discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the LORD reproves the one he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights." (Proverbs 3:11–12, NRSVue)
- Revelational – See Hosea.
- Vicarious – Jesus Christ on our behalf.
- Testimonial - "Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, in the power of God," (2 Timothy 1:8, NRSVue)
- Because of - "I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church." (Colossians 1:24, NRSVue)

Yes, it is possible to suffer today or be persecuted today only because of Jesus.

What Peter is preparing to tell us is truth. Suffering and persecution produces obedience in us to His will. It helps to firm us up and turn our minds more towards Him. "Maintaining proper conduct in suffering requires that Christians maintain a Christlike attitude, living for the present in God's will, knowing that they will live for eternity in His presence." (Raymer 1985, 852)

That is incredibly tough to do when the thing you are suffering from is long term, terminal, or caused by accident or genetics. We would prefer to be healed, right now.

In Bible school, I lived next door to a young man who was born blind. He was also a major practical joker as well. His roommate was sighted and couldn't understand how someone could study with the lights off.

I asked him if he ever had problems with not seeing. I will never forget his response. First, he told me since he had never had sight to begin with, he had no idea what it would be like. He did say though that he knew he would have sight in the future, and he told me, the first person he would ever actually see, is Jesus. He was looking forward to that day.



God is sovereign and at times He does indeed heal. Ultimately, we will all be healed when we go home to be with Him or He comes and removes us in the rapture. Paul dealt with this.

2 Corinthians 12:7–10

“Of course, I am now referring to the wonderful things I saw. One of Satan’s angels was sent to make me suffer terribly, so that I would not feel too proud. **Three times I begged the Lord to make this suffering go away. But he replied, “My kindness is all you need. My power is strongest when you are weak.” So if Christ keeps giving me his power, I will gladly brag about how weak I am. Yes, I am glad to be weak or insulted or mistreated or to have troubles and sufferings, if it is for Christ. Because when I am weak, I am strong.**” (CEV)

Let’s look at our text.

1 Peter 4:1–11

“Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because the one who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human lusts, but for the will of God. For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of indecent behavior, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties, and wanton idolatries. In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them in the same excesses of debauchery, and they slander you; but they will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For the gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead, that though they are judged in the flesh as people, they may live in the spirit according to the will of God. The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer. Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaint. As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the multifaceted grace of God. Whoever speaks is to do so as one who is speaking actual words of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” (NASB 2020)

Anyone ever tell you that as a Christian, you are a major buzz kill? Once we come to Christ, He begins to change us and those things we used to engage in, begin to no longer have an appeal to us.

It may begin simple enough, you just no longer find the fun in going out with your friends anymore. They want to stay out late, and you want to go to church in the morning.

Then there are those lifestyle changes that start coming into play. You no longer feel comfortable sitting with your colleagues at lunch talking about how bad the boss is. This is no different than those Peter is writing to. For some of us, the changes taking place are even more dramatic.

“The pleasures from which Christians of the first century typically abstained were the popular forms of Roman entertainment: the theater with its risqué performances, the chariot races, and the gladiatorial fights with their blood and gore. Christian lifestyle also condemned the “pleasures” of an indulgent temper, sex outside marriage, drinking, slander, lying, covetousness, and theft.” (Jobes 2005, 262)

We have already studied the counter cultural aspects of faith in Peter’s earlier discussion of the impact salvation has on us.

When I became a believer, it didn’t take long for me to realize that my friends did not have the same interests I had now. In fact, I found myself having to determine who I could still be friendly with and who needed to go.



Peter jumps in and tell us that since Jesus has suffered in the flesh, and this is to be understood that He suffered and died in the flesh, we should have the same purpose He had. Obedience to the Father. The word translated suffer here is παθόντος (pathontos). It is translated suffer here in the text and the word can mean “suffer, undergo, endure...die, suffer death. (Friberg, Friberg and Miller 2000, 303)

As Peter picks up the conversation here, he is pointing back to 1 Peter 3:18.

1 Peter 3:18

“For Christ also suffered for sins once for all time, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;” (NASB 2020)

1 Peter 4:1

“Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because the one who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,” (NASB 2020)

These two verses go together. We are told here in verse 1 to arm ourselves with the same purpose that Peter talked about earlier in 1 Peter 3:18. Just as Jesus was put to death in the flesh paying for our sins in His own body, we are now to live in the realization of that fact and put to death through the Holy Spirit, the old man, the flesh and live by the Spirit as well.

This does not tell us we are now sin free, but it does encourage to live with the same purpose Jesus had which is only possible through the Spirit.

Three times (1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18; 4:1) Peter says that it was in His flesh and in His body that Christ paid the penalty for man’s sin. That leads me to say this: Christ did not die in sin, nor did He die under sin, but He died to sin. He took my place, He took your place, and He paid the penalty for our sin. (McGee 1997, 703)

He was then raised from the dead in His glorified body made alive by the Spirit. Because of this suffering He accomplished on our behalf, we are to have the same mind. Paul also said the same thing.

Philippians 2:3–11

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. **Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus**, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but **emptied himself**, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he **humbled himself** by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (ESV)

Got it, have the mind of Christ and humble ourselves to His purpose for us. But what the second part of this verse?

1 Peter 4:1

“Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, **because the one who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin**,” (NASB 2020)

First of all, this is not saying that in order to no longer have a sin problem, get to suffering. Unfortunately, there were some who thought that and wound up abusing themselves or locking themselves up in monasteries to be holy.



Should we be willing to suffer up to the point of death for Christ? Yes.

What is it that Peter has just finished talking about? Baptism and how baptism is our personally identifying with Christ in His death and resurrection. Since we have done this, we should put sin behind us and live for the will of God. We are to walk in the Spirit now.

Galatians 5:16–26

“What I say is this: **let the Spirit direct your lives, and you will not satisfy the desires of the human nature.** For what our human nature wants is opposed to what the Spirit wants, and what the Spirit wants is opposed to what our human nature wants. These two are enemies, and this means that you cannot do what you want to do. If the Spirit leads you, then you are not subject to the Law. What human nature does is quite plain. It shows itself in immoral, filthy, and indecent actions; in worship of idols and witchcraft. People become enemies and they fight; they become jealous, angry, and ambitious. They separate into parties and groups; they are envious, get drunk, have orgies, and do other things like these. I warn you now as I have before: those who do these things will not possess the Kingdom of God. But the Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility, and self-control. There is no law against such things as these. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have put to death their human nature with all its passions and desires. The Spirit has given us life; he must also control our lives. We must not be proud or irritate one another or be jealous of one another.” (GNB)

Identification with Christ, arming oneself with His attitude, also means sharing in His suffering and death. Christ suffered in His body, and a believer suffers in his body also. One who has suffered in this way is done with sin, that is, his being identified with Christ demonstrates (as does baptism) his break with a sinful life. Because of Christ’s death, “we should no longer be slaves to sin, because anyone who has died has been freed from sin” (Rom. 6:6–7). And because of that, we are free to live for Him in the Spirit. (Raymer 1985, 852)

1 Peter 4:1-2

“Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because the one who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, **so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human lusts, but for the will of God.**” (NASB 2020)

Because of our identifying with Christ in baptism, and by our own suffering as well, we are to adopt Christ’s mindset and be dead to sin and alive to the Spirit. We are to have the same unwavering resolve to accomplish the will of God in this world as Christ had.

As believers in Christ, we are to have our lives reflect, since we have been born again, what Christ’s life looked like. Peter contrasts what the BC days looked like for those believers he is writing to, and they sound familiar. The problem we see today in the church is there are way too many who no longer have a sense of what holiness means.

Walking with Christ means being a non-conformist to the world and being holy and set apart to Christ.

Not weird, but His. I say that because there are those in the world today that honestly believe that to be a Christian means you are to demonstrate being ultra-religious all the time.

We are not called to be ultra-religious. Peter has already discussed this for us earlier.

1 Peter 1:14–16

“So you must live as God’s obedient children. Don’t slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires. **You didn’t know any better then. But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy.** For the Scriptures say, “You must be holy because I am holy.”” (NLT)



Holiness is obedience to Christ. It is relationship, it is not dressing up as monks and going full bore Gregorian Chant.

1 Peter 4:3–6

“For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of indecent behavior, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties, and wanton idolatries. In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them in the same excesses of debauchery, and they slander you; but they will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For the gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead, that though they are judged in the flesh as people, they may live in the spirit according to the will of God.” (NASB 2020)

When I became a believer, and my behavior began to change, some of my friends noticed and had difficulty understanding what was going on. I invited some to church and none of them wanted to go. They invited me to some of their parties as well and I started becoming rather picky about things.

The one thing I did notice, some started giving me a really hard time.

Peter here tells us, expect that. Will people lie about us as believers? Yes, expect it. But non-conformity to the world has out of this world benefits.

If those who were our friends continue in their lifestyle and do not repent coming to Christ, they must give an account to God for what they have done. I indeed find myself praying for those who have made life difficult for me in the past that they would repent and come to the Lord, or in a few cases, return to the Lord.

Jesus takes it personally when we are offended and persecuted by others.

Acts 9:3–4

“As he traveled and was nearing Damascus, a light from heaven suddenly flashed around him. Falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, “**Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?**”” (CSB)

Hebrews 10:29–31

“Think how much worse will be the punishment deserved by someone who has trampled underfoot the Son of God; who has treated as something common the blood of the covenant which made him holy; and who has insulted the Spirit, giver of God’s grace! For the One we know is the One who said, “Vengeance is my responsibility; I will repay,” and then said, “ADONAI will judge his people.” **It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God!**” (CJB)

Keep praying for those who have been the source of suffering in your life. Those who call us haters, bigots and on and on, they will indeed have to answer for that unless they repent.

1 Peter 4:6

“For the gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead, that though they are judged in the flesh as people, they may live in the spirit according to the will of God.” (NASB 2020)

Peter is not saying that there is a current active ministry to graveyards. Those who are without Jesus are already dead in their sins. Before you and I came to Christ, we were dead.

All ministry to the lost is ministry to the dead. We are rescuing others from the gates of hell. “For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,” (Colossians 1:13, NASB 2020)



Ephesians 2:1–3

“And you were dead in your offenses and sins, in which you previously walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all previously lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the rest.” (NASB 2020)

In Christ, we are still dead men walking, the sin nature due to the fall in Genesis 3 is the reason. But we are no longer spiritually dead.

We now live in the Spirit according to the will of God.

One thing Peter is intensely aware of is where he was on the prophetic clock. He too was expecting the soon return of Jesus Christ for His church in the pre-tribulation rapture of the church. He teaches with that idea clearly in mind and here, he uses the nearness of Christ’s return for the church as a reason why we should not play games with living for the Lord.

We are to live in the Spirit.

1 Peter 4:7–9

“The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer. Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaint.” (NASB 2020)

The end of all things is indeed near. How are we living as a result of that?

Have we taken seriously what it is Jesus did for us on the cross and what it is we did when we identified with His death, burial and resurrection in baptism? For many of us, the answer is a hearty yes.

But for many others in the church today, there are other priorities that are thrown in front of making disciples because the end of all things is near. It is not all about having a great experience on Sunday.

It is all about Jesus. It is not about protesting the world being the world, it is all about Jesus. It is not being distracted by current events or the latest lies being thrown at us by politicians, it is all about Jesus. It is not insulating us from the world and boycotting everything the world does, we are to be all about Jesus.

Why? Because the end of all things is near. How near? If you have non-Christian friends, tell them Merry Christmas now in case we are raptured before then.

We look at the world around us and we know that everything Jesus warned about in Matthew 24 is indeed taking place, everywhere all at once and with increasing frequency.

Israel is in the land, exactly as prophesied in the scriptures.

Ezekiel 20:33-38 clearly talks about a return in unbelief in preparation for judgement.

Ezekiel 22:17-22 also describes a regathering focusing on Jerusalem.

Ezekiel 36:22-24 and 37 also discusses the regathering of the nation in unbelief.

Isaiah 11:11-12 also deals with the regathering of Israel from the four corners of the earth.



Yes, Israel is back in the land. Yes, they are back in Jerusalem.

The Bible does not allow for several worldwide regatherings in unbelief; it allows for **one worldwide regathering** in unbelief, followed by the last one, the one in faith, which is the second one. This text only permits two worldwide regatherings from the four corners of the earth. **Therefore, the present Jewish State is very relevant to Bible prophecy.** (Fruchtenbaum 2003, 103)

We are currently watching, in real time, Amos 1, Obadiah and possibly Psalm 83 being fulfilled. Now we hear rumblings from Iran and Turkey that they will invade Israel. Hmm.

There is another event that is also in Ezekiel that we are not certain of the timing of. Some believe it will happen before the rapture, others after, some at the middle and others at end of the Tribulation and a few at the end of the Millennium. It is the Gog Magog war referenced in Ezekiel 38.

Ezekiel 38:1–6

“The LORD’S message came to me: “Son of man, turn toward Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. Prophesy against him and say: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Look, I am against you, Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and bring you out with all your army, horses, and horsemen, all of them fully armed, a great company with shields of different types, all of them armed with swords. Persia, Ethiopia, and Put are with them, all of them with shields and helmets. They are joined by Gomer with all its troops and by Beth Togarmah from the remote parts of the north with all its troops—many peoples are with you.” (NET 2nd ed.)

The leader of this army is named Gog, ruler of “Magog,” which means “the land of Gog.” It was located between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. The title “chief prince” can be translated “prince of Rosh,” a place that hasn’t been determined yet. But if “prince of Rosh” is the correct translation, then this man will rule over Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. The latter two places are located in eastern Asia Minor along with Gomer and Beth-Togarmah. Prince Gog’s allies will be Persia (Iran), Cush (ancient Ethiopia), Put (Libya), Gomer, and Beth-Togarmah, both located near the Black Sea. Since all these nations except Put, Cush, and Persia are located north of Israel, it’s tempting to identify Rosh with Russia and therefore Meshech with Moscow and Tubal with Tobolsk, both cities in Russia; but we would have a hard time defending this on linguistic grounds. This doesn’t rule out the participation of modern Russia, since it is located in the north (vv. 6, 15; 39:2), but neither does it demand it. (Wiersbe 2000, 173)

Turkey, Iran, Iran’s current allies, possibly Russia. So why are we talking about them?

1 Peter 4:7

“The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.” (NASB 2020)

Just this past week, the “Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on Sunday appeared to threaten to invade Israel in support of the Palestinians, and to put an end to the nearly 10-month-old war Israel is fighting against Hamas in Gaza.” (Berman 2024)

July 30, 2024

According to Iranian state media, Iran’s President Masoud Pezeshkian, is pushing to unify “Islamic nations in confronting the Zionists” amid the Gaza war. He also wants to have a foreign policy that will prioritize ties with Muslim countries. (Frantzman 2024)



Iran and Turkey have agreed to back terrorist organizations fighting against Israel, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi proclaimed on Wednesday following talks with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. (Koningsveld 2024)

In light of what we see prophetically, the end of all things is indeed near. There is nothing that must take place before Jesus fulfills His promise to remove the church prior to the beginning of the Tribulation.

This knowledge shouldn't scare us, it should move us to prayer for effectiveness as we continue to reach others for Christ. We know He is coming soon. There was a situation in Judah where they also knew something was coming very soon, the Assyrian army and it should have moved them to prayer. But that isn't what happened.

Isaiah 22:12–13

“At that time the Sovereign LORD who commands armies, called for weeping and mourning, for shaved heads and sackcloth. But look, there is outright celebration! You say, “Kill the ox and slaughter the sheep, eat meat and drink wine. Eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!”” (NET 2nd ed.)

Since the end is near, that also means persecution will be increasing and prayer, is of high priority in persecution. We must, in these last days, get back to basics. For the church, that is loving each other. Jesus said that would be the distinguishing characteristic of the church and we must indeed go there.

John 13:34–35

“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. **By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.**” (ESV)

In these last days, we must be sensitive to what is going on around us and realize that ministry many times is nothing more than being hospitable to others and listening to them in love.

Believers' attitudes are crucial. Believers realize they are owners of nothing and stewards of everything. This open door policy was not only needed for traveling church workers, but also for local believers who had lost their jobs and homes because of persecution. This command, like the others, shows the corporate nature of the Christian faith. (Utley 2000, 256)

1 Peter 4:10–11

“As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the multifaceted grace of God. Whoever speaks is to do so as one who is speaking actual words of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” (NASB 2020)

Peter continues with the idea of the church being the church with those who are in it as believers. Love is important and is reflected also in exercising the spiritual gifts we have been given.

Peter is telling how we love each other and continue with the mission in the face of persecution. We exercise our spiritual gifts and serve each other in the body. We are to do so by the strength God provides, not in our own strength.

We see way too many today proclaiming they are exercising a spiritual gift or gifts, but it has become all about them rather than keeping the focus on the Lord.



Peter here makes it incredibly clear that when gifts are used the way he describes, it is God who gets the glory.

We are living in the last days. There is no doubt of that, and Peter even made emphasis of it in his letter. How closer are we now 2000 years later is visible in the news. It is this sobering fact, that moves us to all things in love. As we follow Him and serve Him, we give Him glory.

Peter still has more to say about persecution as he is writing at the beginning of severe persecution under Nero. We will look at that next time.

Romans 3:21–24

“But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.” (NLT)

Romans 10:9–13

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”” (NLT)

ABC’s of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

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