

Living Here, Longing for Home: Exchanged Life

1 Peter 4:1-11

Read 1 Peter 4:1-11 together:

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, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. 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. 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 account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. 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. The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: 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 chapters 1-3 Peter focused on the individual and the corporate response to suffering and persecution. He has spoken about holiness, our status as chosen children of God, and submission. Each of these passages pertains both to the individual as well as the corporate body of the local church.

Once and For All

Chapter 3 concludes with a beautiful description of Christ's suffering and its implications for every child of God. Peter reminds us that the old system of sacrifice has been abolished, "Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He may bring us to God."

- ? How does the gospel affect your mindset toward holiness?
- ? In what do you find comfort when you feel holiness is an unobtainable goal?
- ? How can believers show holiness in how we submit to the government and each other?

In chapter 4, Peter now turns his focus on the individual response of the Christian. Peter is now speaking to individuals when he says, "Since therefore Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking." Let's look at 3 ways the gospel of Jesus' atoning sacrifice should impact every Christian.

The Exchanged Life: 1 Peter 4:1,2

Peter exhorts believers to think like Jesus. But, how? What do I need to think like Jesus? Verse 2 says that we are to live the rest of our time in for the will of God rather than for our human passions. Jesus Christ fulfilled the law; the entire law. The only way for God to redeem fallen humans was for a perfect, sinless human to fulfill the law and to then voluntarily offer himself as the sacrifice for all sins.

- ? Have you ever exchanged your life of sin for Christ's life of perfect sinlessness?
- ? Can you guarantee yourself that you have "plenty of time" to make that exchange?

If the past 18 months or so have taught us anything it is that none of us has a promise of long life and health. You only get one life. When you breathe your last breath, you will be ushered into eternity, either with an exchanged life of righteousness in Christ or into eternal punishment for your life of sin.

In verses 3-6 Peter challenges Christians to live out their exchanged life so that the world can see the difference in us, and be drawn to Jesus.

Love Wins: 1 Peter 4:7-9

Peter was convinced that Jesus could return at any time.

- ? Why do you think Peter believed "the end of all things" could be so soon?
- ? Given his belief in the coming of Jesus, what does Peter conclude we must do?

Peter proceeds to say, "...therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers."

- ? What do you think Peter means when he says "for the sake of your prayers"?

Peter also tells us that "love covers a multitude of sins."

- ? What do you think Peter means when he says that?

Peter also demands that we show hospitality to one another without grumbling.

- ? What does it mean to "show hospitality to one another"?
- ? How can we practice hospitality within the church?

Don't Waste Your Life 1 Peter 4:10-12

Peter now addresses the topic of gifts within the church. It is interesting how Peter introduces this subject, "As each one has received a gift..." Notice the focus of our gifts within the church: to serve one another. Our gifts are not to be hoarded and wasted on ourselves! Rather, we are to use our gifts in service to one another.

- ? Have you ever excused yourself from serving others under the excuse of, "I have no gifts"?

Peter gives no room for such an excuse! We have all received a gift; don't claim you have no gift.

- ? What is your gift? What are your gifts?
- ? Why do we ignore (or hoard) our gifts?

All Christians have the greatest gift of all time: the gift of the gospel! If you truly claim to have no other gifts, in the grace and power of the Holy Spirit, share that gift with a lost and dying world!