

1 Peter 4:1-11 Living in the Last Days Part 1

Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, 2 that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. 3 For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. 4 In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you. 5 They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. 6 For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. 7 But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. 8 And above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.” 9 Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. 10 As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11 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.

As we begin our time in the word today – I want to draw your attention once again to V.7 But the end of all things is at hand;

A) Peter wrote those words around the year AD 64!

B) So that statement can seem a bit odd to us knowing that 1957 years have passed since the writing of those words.

C) What did Peter mean the “end of all things is at hand”?

Then I remember that the Holy Spirit is the one who inspired Peter to write those words,

A) And the Holy Spirit also inspired Paul and John over 1900 years ago to also write about the soon return of Jesus –

B) I am prompted to ask why would the Holy Spirit do that knowing full well that close to 2,000 years would pass and we are still here and Jesus has not yet come.

C) Is the Holy Spirit being like the little boy who cried wolf?

1) What is the deal?

D) It is for that reason that some people cringe when a pastor says something like we are living in the last days –

1) The Church has been talking about the coming of Jesus for nearly 2,000 yrs now and it hasn't happened

I want to address those questions before we dive into our text!

A) First of all we need to understand that God's time table is so different from ours –

Aa) God says that 1,000 years is like one day – one day is like 1,000 yrs

B) So we say – 2,000 years have passed by since Jesus died and Rose and promised to RETURN

1) and the Lord says -actually in my estimation – it has only been ABOUT 2 days – (Magnifies God's patience)

C) The Church has always wrestled with this delay in the Lord's coming – turn a couple of pages to 2 Peter 3:4

Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.” 5 For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, 6 by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. 7 But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

D)The Lord delays because He doesn't want anyone to perish – He doesn't want anyone to miss out -

1)He is waiting – One last person – YOU TODAY

But a 2nd reason why the Holy Spirit would inspire the apostles to write about the soon return of Jesus is this:

A)He wants the church in every generation and every century to always be ready – always be watching

B)He knows that we will so much more impactful if we truly believe that Jesus could come back today.

C)So here is what we need to understand about the Phrase the Last days.

"The last days" is technically a phrase in the NT that refers to the time between the first coming of Christ and the second coming of Christ,

A)The time frame between the first coming of Jesus and the 2nd coming of Jesus

Aa)made up a time period theologically that we would call the last days.

B)Prior to the 1st coming of Jesus born as the baby in Bethlehem

1)all of human history was moving toward his coming –

C)The fulfillment of the Genesis 3 prophecy There was a man coming – born of the seed of the woman

1) a virgin – who would Crush the head of Satan –

2)But who would also be bruised by Satan

D)The coming of Jesus – started that segment – Jesus was bruised by Satan at the Cross –

1)Jesus defeated Satan and the Demons – destroying their power over men and death

E)and Jesus is coming back one day where he will ULTIMATELY Crush the head of Satan

So according to Biblical theology – we have been living in the Last days since the first coming of Jesus.

A)So the Big question that we wonder about is this: Are we living in the LAST OF THE LAST DAYS?

B)Are the days that we are living in now putting us closer to the coming of Jesus than we have ever been before?

C)The Answer is absolutely! Here is why? We could point to the rebirth of Israel in 1948 –

1)Absolute miracle of Bible Prophecy.

D)We could point to Fulfilled prophecy

1)the reality that all the prophecies that need to be fulfilled for Jesus to return –=have all been fulfilled

E)So if this was a sporting event – we could say we are in a period right now of Overtime.

1)There is nothing that we are waiting on prophetically to happen.

But I want to point to four things that are indications that our time is getting short.

A)#1 The Current Battle going on between Israel and Hamas

B)Why is that significant? The battle itself is not really significant–

1)those type of skirmishes have been going on forever.

C)Although this one has definitely been more radical in the destruction and death tolls of any in recent memory

But here is what is significant – Last week a league of 57 Muslim nations came together

A)To demand that Israel – stop their assault Not Palestine – not Hamas – Israel – 57 nations

B)At that meeting - The Afghan Foreign Minister – called “The plight of the Palestinian people is the bleeding wound of the Islamic world today,”

C)All of those leaders agree on this one THING the tension in Israel will never stop until the Palestinians have Jerusalem as their capital city

D)They already control the temple Mt and they want to control the whole city

1)This whole fight started with an uproar in Jerusalem

Here is the reality – Israel is never going to agree to that!

A) So why is that significant - Speaking of the last days Zechariah 12:2-3 “I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem. ³ On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations.” Zechariah 12:2-3

B) Catch this: The center of all of this Hostility is a city Jerusalem that is 48 Sq miles

C) Just to put that in Perspective – The city of San Diego is 374 Sq miles

D) Oceanside is 43 Sq miles - So the world is in uproar over a city about the size of Oceanside

E) Zechariah 12:2 is becoming true right before our eyes!

Here is another reason:

A) The Book of Revelation describes in the last days where the entire world will come together under a one world leader –

B) For many years the reality of that just seemed impossible to many of us.

1) Too many egos – too many ideologies –

C) Then Covid happened and we saw the entire world basically react the same way

1) to try and prevent the Virus from Spreading – lock down

2) Unified approach - That has never happened

D) Now picture this: They say there are 8 billion people on the Planet today – and over 2 billion refer to themselves as Christians

1) That number is probably high for only people who are genuine followers of Jesus

So let's cut that number in half – say it is only 1 billion –

A) Imagine when the Rapture happens (explain) and suddenly 1 billion people from countries all over the world suddenly vanish

B) That is going to send the world – reeling – Mass Chaos

C) The world will come together like never before to fix the problem –

1) and a leader the Bible Calls the Anti-christ will emerge to lead the charge

D) After 2020 – that seems a lot more possible doesn't it ?

The book of Revelation also predicts in the last days – we will move into a Cashless society –

A) The only way that people can buy or sell is if they have an identification mark

B) According to many Technology sites including GOVT TECH -

1) The Pandemic is accelerating us toward a cashless society.

C) More and more people want to limit their contact with other people.

1) Money is filthy

D) We could go on and on – but let me give you one more!

43% of millennials 'don't know, don't care, don't believe' God exists: Christian Post Magazine May 2021

E) Why is that significant?

“But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, ⁴treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power.” ² Timothy 3:1-5

So 43% of millennials don't believe in the existence of God!

A) This is why that is significant - If there is no God then there is no one to answer to –

B) There are no morals - I can live however I want – I can sleep with whoever I want –

1)in jest whatever I want – no lasting consequences

C)If there is no God I have not been created in his image – I am free to forge my own destiny.

1)I can be who I want to be – what Gender I want to be – there is no standard that has been set – to each his own

D)Guys we are living in those times! 2 Timothy 3 is being fulfilled right before our eyes

Here is another example of 2 Timothy 3 –

A)I read this past week about a Father in Canada who was arrested earlier this week.

B)The reason he was arrested was this: **He violated a court order banning him from speaking out about his biological daughter's gender transition.**

C)Here is what happened – his 13 year old daughter was exposed to pro-transgender educational materials at her public school.

C)She started to think – she was really meant to be a boy – so she talked to a guidance counselor who encouraged her in her desire to transition

D)They allowed her to change her name to a male name – all her teachers started to call her by this name – (all without her parents knowledge)

School officials received input from a Psychologist who encouraged the young girl to take testosterone.

A)And referred her to an Endocrinologist at a nearby hospital- all without her parents knowledge –

B)Her dad found out when he was looking at the School yearbook and saw his daughter with a boy's name – and questioned it

C)When he protested publically against the school he was arrested

D)Now it might be easy for us to say well that is Canada and they are more liberal there.

1)We here in the USA tend to follow about 5-10 years behind Canada

E)Paul said – Terrible times will come in the Last days – we are living in those times.

So How are we to be living? 4 thoughts from V.1-6 of our text –

A)Next week we will focus on V.7-11 and gain some more insight about who we are to be living

B)We are called to Redeem the time – How ?

#1 Resist Sin - Verse 1, "Therefore, since Christ suffered in the flesh," he had just talked about the sufferings of Jesus, "arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who is suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin."

C)That little phrase "arm yourselves," is a military phrase. It's a military phrase of being prepared.

D)Picture, if you will, a soldier putting on his gear and getting ready to go into battle.

1)That's the idea of the phrase, "arm yourself."

Listen: you and I cannot live with a peace-time mentality.

A)We can't chill out, lay back, be cool, because we are living in a war zone!

B)So the very call to be armed is a reminder that the danger still exists; that's the context that Peter is speaking into,

1)a very realistic view of life in this fallen world.

C)I'm afraid that many of us take the doctrine of The Fall as seriously as we should

D)I think it is sometimes easy for us to forget just how tragically broken our world is, because of sin!

And we don't take, seriously, the presence and power of remaining sin;

A)And because of that, we live naïvely; as it relates to temptation and how dangerous it is.

B)We live naïvely in terms of the seductiveness of sin, and because of that, we don't arm ourselves well,

1)and because we don't arm ourselves well,

2)we fall into areas of sin and temptation because we are not living defensively.

C)I see this naivety often in doing premarital counseling –

1)which is partly about warning couples of what is coming – what to avoid

D)Big mistakes that many engaged people make especially young ones is that they forget that they are marrying a sinner.

1)You know that right – married a sinner

So you start talking about the things that will happen and how selfishness will reel it's ugly head

A)They look – they smile – you know what they are thinking – Not us – we are so in Love!

B)Two months after the wedding – Pastor Rob – Help you were right this is crazy!!!!!!!

C)Arm yourselves – Get your head in the game – don't be naïve -

1) "Get mentally prepared for the fight you're about to get into." That's the idea.

For the believer, the battle always, always begins in the realm of the mind.

A)Before it goes anywhere else it's in our thought life.

B)That's why in 1 Peter chapter 1:13 , if you recall, Peter said, "**Gird up the loins of your mind," be prepared mentally.**

C)So, what kind of a mind do we need?

1)We need a militant attitude toward sin. We need an aggressive stand toward sin.

Paul put it in Romans 6, "**Do not let sin reign in your mortal bodies, that you should obey its desires.**"

We should resist sin not only because of what it can do to us,

A)We should hate sin and resist it because of what it did to him---it killed him.

B) When I look at the cross, I am REMINDED of what my sin did to my Savior.

C)Notice what it says, "**Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh.**"

We are called to arm myself with the same mind that Jesus had toward sin and suffering.

A)When Jesus came to earth, he had a militant attitude toward sin **as proven by his steadfast movement toward the cross.**

B)He set his face like a Rock toward Jerusalem knowing he would die there on the cross for the sins of the world

1)Jesus was like a soldier marching into battle to destroy sin's power

C)Arm ourselves with this same mindset of Jesus toward sin – Sin needs to be destroyed

1)Now what does Peter mean when he says - "**For he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.**"

What does that mean? Does it mean that suffering has some kind of magical quality –

A)The minute I suffer, BOOM, I become holy? Well, you know that's not true.

A)You have evidence this week that that's not true.

B)You suffered and your reaction was anything but holy right?

1)Fleshed out – the suffering revealed you are still flawed!!!!

C)Peter is referring to what often happens in a Christian's life when they decide to resist sin –

1)Suffering is the result

D)Unbelievers don't understand us – when we seek to live holy lives

1) when we take a stand for Righteousness – Suffering is often the result of that

E)The people to whom Peter is writing had already experienced friends **and family who had suffered and even died for their faith in Christ**

So the first thing that Peter tells us about how we are to be living is we need to resist sin

#2 Run toward the will of God - that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.

A)Peter presents a contrast – We used to run in a direction that was all about pleasing our flesh

B)But now we are to run in a direction that is all about pleasing God!

C) We are to live in way where the will of God is our top pursuit!

How do we determine what the will of God is for our lives?

A) Many Christians approach this so wrong - Bible Roulette – open Bible and point –

➤ **Judas went out and hanged himself / Weird – again – go and do likewise**

B) Others look for signs - Farmer praying about his life – looked up in the clouds one day -

1) He looked at the clouds and saw what looked like the letters P&C – Preach Christ –

C) Quit farming – Started preaching – Horrible at it

Cc) A very poor communicator – not great Bible Knowledge

1) Months went by – the guy was struggling

D) A friend finally questioned him – what are you doing –

1) He told his friend about the sign in the clouds – P&C - Could it have meant – Plant Corn?

E) Signs are hard to distinguish

Here is what we need to realize about discovering the will of God – You start with General will

A) Start with God desires all men to be saved! Start there

B) You start with what the Bible clearly tells us about the will of God – The General will of God – 1) for example

“For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5

Following the general will of God can often feel like you are swimming against the current of today’s moral tide

“Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

1 Thessalonians 5:18

We look for God’s hand in situations and give thanks he is on the throne

He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:8

For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

1 Peter 2:15

We do the will of God when we “keep [our] conduct ... honorable” by doing “good deeds.”

A) Living humbly and showing grace mercy and love to those around us.

B) Now here is what we need to understand –

1) Living in the general will of God actually puts us in the right place to receive the specific will of God for our lives

C) That comes as we do what Jesus said - But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Matthew 6:33

D) First is the key word in that passage: God’s kingdom – His will and his way are our first pursuit – everything else falls into place is the idea

E) Seeking God and His kingdom first – puts us on the right path –

1) tuned into the right frequency to hear clearly from the Lord

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Proverbs 3:5-6

Literally in all your ways KNOW HIM –

A) Not just acknowledge him – “Lord this is what I am going – just wanted to keep you in the loop.

B) Deeper than – in all your ways KNOW HIM

C) Lord I am seeking your heart in this situation – I want to walk in your way.

1) I am wanting to discern your direction – how this lines up with your heart your character – your word

D)The promise – he will direct your path.

E)So #1 Resist sin - #2 Run toward God's will –
Cover these last two quickly

#3 Renounce your past V.3 3 For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.

A)Spiritual Principle – New birth should result in new behavior

B)Noticed the phrase - **we have spent enough of our past lifetime-** EVERYONE SAY ENOUGH

C)We need to say to our past sexual immorality – ENOUGH –

1)DRUNKENNESS – ENOUGH/ partying – ENOUGH

D)That is who we used to be – but we have been changed –

1)New Creation in Christ – Done with those things
Put away childish things

Notice also how Peter ties all of that kind of behavior to abominable idolatries

A)The Reason is this – all of that type of behavior is about the worship of Self

B)The worship of self never satisfies -

C)We have been made to worship Not self – but God

1)live in relationship with God – that is where true and lasting satisfaction is found

D)So resist sin, run toward God's will, renounce your past.

1)Those three things will make your time count living in the last days

Let me give you a fourth and we'll close: Reach the lost. V. 4 In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you. 5 They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead

Listen, unsaved people think it strange when they see you renouncing the past –

A)no longer running after the things you used to run toward!

B)They do not understand when God changes a life. They do not get it.

C)How many of you have lost friends since coming to Christ?

D)How many of you have family members who act weird around you

1) or don't get you now that you are a Christian?

E)What happens is our unsaved friends and family either get saved

1)or they just stop wanting to be around us

In Peters day – Christians were actually being martyred for their faith –

A)V.5 Peter gives this reminder about those who were persecuting the church 5 They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead

B)Note his point here is not to say – rest assured those who are hassling you are going to get theirs -

C)No the mention of Judgment is really a reminder –

D)There is a Judgement that is coming & people are going to have to stand before God

6 For this reason the gospel was preached

For this reason – the gospel was preached –

A)We need to be mindful – people around us are going to be judged –

B)We need to preach Jesus to them –

C)The Gospel is the power of God unto Salvation for everyone who believes

“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.”

A)The dead that Peter is referring to here is not those who are dead in sin –

B)He is speaking past tense- the gospel WAS preached / NOT IS

C)He is speaking of those who responded to the message of the gospel but have died –

1)those who were martyred –

The gospel was preached to them –

A)They received the Lord / they ceased to live to please their flesh & as a result were judged by men –

B)They were falsely judged by men, they were persecuted, and they were killed for their faith.

C)And at the time of the writing of Peter they were dead, - they had been killed

But they were very alive before God getting their reward. So Preach Jesus

A)Been said if we don't evangelize we will fossilize

B)Talking to others about Jesus – keeps you sharp in your walk w/ Jesus - Keeps you alive

C)Heart is pounding in your chest – nervous – God is moving working - That is the best

1)See people respond – even better -

D)Knowing we are living in the last days – should motivate us to preach the gospel

1)to whoever we can – whenever we can

So don't just spend your time, invest your time. Make time count.

A)The best of your time is when you use the rest of your time to invest your time in doing the will of God.

I'm going to close with a true story. In September of 1999 in the West Bank over in Israel--- a group of terrorist were preparing a bomb that was going to be used to blow up two buses full of people in Israel

Now In the West Bank they were on daylight savings time. Across that line in Israel they had switched back to standard time. You know where I'm going with this. They prepared the time bomb, got it over to their counterparts in Israel to place the bomb. Their counterparts didn't quite understand the time change thing, and the bomb exploded one hour earlier than it was supposed to. It killed three of the terrorists, but it spared two busloads of civilians.

You could say they were saved in an hour of time. That hour made all the difference.

This hour can make all the difference.

A)This time could make all the difference in eternity.

B)So Resist sin – Run toward the will of God – Renounce your past (new creation) – 1)and Reach the lost

C)Amen?