



## VIII. THE EXHORTATION TO SAINTS IN THE WORLD (1 Peter 4:1-6)

## A. The Principle Established (1 Peter 4:1-2)

1. The example given—"Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh" (1 Peter 4:1)
  - a. The expression of likeness—"Forasmuch"
    - (1) This reminds us to look back at the previous context, which involved Christ's suffering in the flesh (1 Peter 3:18-22).
    - (2) This is confirmed by the statement that follows the *forasmuch*.
  - b. The example of likeness—"as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh"
2. The exhortation given (1 Peter 4:1)
  - a. Arm yourselves
    - (1) The world has a corrupted view of Christianity, thinking that we encourage the taking up of physical arms in order to fight the Christian fight.
    - (2) While we are indeed encouraged to take up arms and armour, it is a spiritual battle rather than one that is physical in nature.
      - a) We arm ourselves, but with a mindset (1 Peter 4:1) and with a book (Ephesians 6:17). After all, the weapons of our warfare are NOT CARNAL (2 Corinthians 10:4).
      - b) We adorn ourselves in armour, but it is spiritual in every facet (Romans 13:12-14; 2 Corinthians 6:1-10; Ephesians 6:10-20; 1 Thessalonians 5:8-10).
  - b. With the same mind (Philippians 2:5)
    - (1) Doing nothing through strife or vainglory (Philippians 2:3)
    - (2) Doing all in lowliness of mind, esteeming other better than ourselves (Philippians 2:3)
    - (3) Looking on the things of others (Philippians 2:4)
    - (4) Making ourselves of no reputation (Philippians 2:7)
    - (5) Humbling ourselves and becoming obedient unto our appointed suffering (Philippians 2:8)
3. The outcome sought (1 Peter 4:1-2)
  - a. The statement made (1 Peter 4:1)
    - (1) He that hath suffered in the flesh
    - (2) Hath ceased from sin
  - b. The explanation given (1 Peter 4:2)
    - (1) That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men
    - (2) That he should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the will of God
  - c. The passage expounded
    - (1) The present context and explanation of suffering is that of death—"as Christ hath suffered for us" (1 Peter 4:1).
    - (2) In other words, the suffering of the passage is not merely a beating or persecution, but a full-on death.



- (3) This may seem odd, especially when one considers that the person is said to live in 1 Peter 4:2.
- (4) This passage is yet another reminder of the difference between our position and our practice.
  - a) Positionally, the believer is dead and has therefore “ceased from sin” (1 Peter 4:1; Romans 6:2, 6-9; Galatians 2:20; Galatians 5:24; Colossians 3:3; 1 John 3:4-9).
  - b) Practically, the believer must die and choose to cease from sin (1 Peter 4:2-4; Romans 6:4; Galatians 2:20; Galatians 5:25; Colossians 3:5-17).
    - i) Not living the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men (Romans 6:12; Romans 13:14; Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 4:22; Titus 2:12; 1 Peter 1:14; 1 Peter 2:11)
    - ii) But to the will of God
      - (a) Understanding God’s will
        - (i) It is simple yet complex. For example, there are some things that are God’s will for all (1 Thessalonians 4:3-6) and other things that are more specifically geared toward individuals (1 Corinthians 1:1).
        - (ii) It is important in evil days and can only be understood by those who have wisdom (Ephesian 5:15-17).
        - (iii) It is a matter of prayer as exemplified in Paul’s epistle to the Colossians (Colossians 1:9; Colossians 4:12).
      - (b) Doing God’s will
        - (i) It must be done from the heart. It is clear from scripture that God’s will can be done against one’s will (1 Corinthians 9:17), but it is also from scripture that God desires for us to do His will from the heart (Ephesian 6:5-6).
        - (ii) It ought to be done to the fullest extent (Romans 12:2). Many Bible teachers have understood Romans 12:2 to teach three levels of attainment to God’s will: 1.) the good will of God; 2.) the acceptable will of God; and 3.) the perfect will of God.
      - (c) Rewards of God’s will (Romans 15:32)
        - (i) Those led by the will of God find great joy in their submission or yielding to said will.
        - (ii) Obedience to the will of God also yields refreshing, both to the one submitting to the will of God and to those who come into contact with that person.



- B. The Past Explained (1 Peter 4:3)
1. The sufficiency of their past
    - a. The time of sufficiency—“the time past of our life”
      - (1) This statement is crucial. Had the Bible not included the statement, it could be construed to believe that the believers were presently satisfied with their way of living in the past.
      - (2) The truth is that lost people tend to be satisfied with living as lost people, else they would get saved and cease to live as lost people.
    - b. The declaration of sufficiency—“may suffice us”
      - (1) The word *suffice* means to satisfy (Ruth 2:14, 18; John 14:8).
      - (2) The lives they lived in the past certainly did not satisfy the Lord, but it had satisfied them.
  2. The motivation of their past
    - a. Understanding the concept
      - (1) It was not that the Gentiles told the people what to do.
      - (2) Instead, they *wrought* or *did the work* that the Gentiles willed to do.
    - b. Showing the practice
      - (1) The Jewish people have a longstanding practice of wanting to live like Gentiles.
      - (2) The Lord warned them before entering the land of promise that should they refuse to drive out their enemies, the enemies would become trouble for them (Exodus 23:27-33; Numbers 33:55-56; Deuteronomy 7:1-11, 16; Joshua 23:12-13).
      - (3) This became a practice and could be considered as a root for many of the actions throughout Israel’s history that put them at odds with the Lord (Psalm 106:34-36).
  3. The deeds of their past—“when we walked in”
    - a. Lasciviousness
      - (1) The word *lasciviousness* involves unrestrained lusts (2 Corinthians 12:21; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 4:19; Jude 1:4).
      - (2) It is a sin of the heart that manifests itself outwardly (Matthew 7:21-23).
    - b. Lusts (see Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:18-22; Colossians 3:5-7; 1 Peter 1:14; 1 Peter 2:11)
    - c. Excess of wine; Note: This is identified in other similar lists as drunkenness (Galatians 5:21; Ephesians 5:18).
    - d. Revellings (Galatians 5:21)
      - (1) The word *revelling* suggests feasting or partying in a disorderly manner. It is connected to the word *rebel*.
      - (2) In the modern vernacular, it is akin to partying.
    - e. Banquetings; Note: Again, this is connected to feasting.
    - f. Abominable idolatries; This would involve idolatrous behaviour that was abominable in the sight of God.



## C. The Change Experienced (1 Peter 4:4-6)

1. The separation brought (1 Peter 4:4)
  - a. The parties of separation—"they...ye"
    - (1) *They* refers back to the Gentiles or those who were unsaved.
    - (2) *Ye* refers to the believers.
  - b. The work of separation—"ye run not with them to the same excess of riot"
    - (1) The Gentiles, or the unbelievers, were still running to the same excess of riot.
    - (2) The believers, however, were no longer running with them to the same excess of riot. Note: This does not suggest that the believers refused to speak with them or that they refused to do anything with them that could lead to an opportunity to witness, but that they would not run with them in their wickedness.
  - c. The slander of separation
    - (1) They think it strange.
    - (2) They speak evil of you.
    - (3) Note: Let us not forget our theme—suffering then glory. To expound upon that, the suffering is often for the sake of bringing others (often those inflicting the suffering) to a right relationship with God.
      - a) In the present context, the believers were suffering at the hands (or mouths) of the world.
      - b) They had previously run together in great harmony, but the gospel of Christ divided them.
      - c) At first, the world simply thought them strange for no longer running in the ways of the world.
      - d) After some time, those that had been their running partners began to speak evil of them.
      - e) In the end, believers were to separate and suffer the consequences in hopes of bringing their old running mates to a right relationship with God. Failure to separate could hurt those who were in the world.
2. The judgment considered (1 Peter 4:5)
  - a. The giving of account—"who shall"
    - (1) There are two parties mentioned in the previous verse: *they...ye*.
    - (2) Most believe that the *Who* refers back to the *they* of 1 Peter 4:4.
    - (3) Regardless, it should not be ignored that believers also give account to the Lord (Romans 14:12; Hebrews 13:17).
  - b. The recipient of account—"him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead" (Acts 10:42; 2 Timothy 4:1)
    - (1) The word *quick* speaks of that which is alive.
    - (2) The word *dead* obviously speaks of those who are not alive. In full transparency, the word *dead* can also refer to the condition of the unsaved prior to their quickening. That being said, this phrase could, at times, distinguish between saved and lost.



3. The conditions exemplified (1 Peter 4:6)
  - a. Note: Before we move to what the verse says, consider for a moment what it does not say.
    - (1) Consider the verb tense used to describe the preaching of the gospel—“WAS the gospel preached.”
    - (2) Consider the verb tense used to describe the audience—“ARE dead.”
    - (3) In other words, the people are now dead, but they could have been, and, in fact, were, alive at the time in which the gospel was being preached unto them.
    - (4) That being said, this verse is not to be used to suggest that people get a second chance to hear the gospel after death. This is true for those who were in paradise or in hell at the time of Jesus’ death.
  - b. Remembering the context
    - (1) We have been talking about believers who no longer ran with the unsaved Gentiles and were, as a result, judged by those men.
      - a) First, the unsaved Gentiles thought them strange.
      - b) Second, the unsaved Gentiles spoke evil of them.
      - c) Thirdly...
    - (2) Upon hearing the gospel and having their lives changed thereby, believers were to separate themselves from the world and unto God.
  - c. The connecting phrase—“For for this cause”
    - (1) The cause of preaching the gospel unto men is the readying of those men for giving account of themselves to God (see 1 Peter 4:5).
    - (2) This cause is shown again in our passage by the phrase, “live according to God in the spirit.”
  - d. The audience set forth
    - (1) Simply put, the dead are those who are no longer alive.
    - (2) In the context, the theme has emphasized the suffering of saints.
    - (3) It seems likely that the audience explained involves those, who, at one time, had the gospel preached unto them, received it and allowed it to bring them into a right relationship with Him.
    - (4) By some means, likely that of persecution, these believers lost their lives.
  - e. The divide brought forth
    - (1) These believers likely separated from the unsaved Gentiles as illustrated in the passage above (see 1 Peter 4:4).
    - (2) As a result of their newfound faith and choice to separate, they were “judged according to men in the flesh.” (i.e., First, they were thought strange. Second, they were evil spoken of. Third, they were seemingly put to death.).
    - (3) Regardless of what men thought and said of them (and did to them), these believers lived according to God in the spirit.