



The First Epistle General of Peter

Exhortations in View of the End

1 Peter 4:7-19

- I. EXHORTATIONS FOR BELIEVERS TO BELIEVERS (1 Peter 4:7-11)
 - A. The Cause for the Exhortation (1 Peter 4:7)
 1. The time of the end
 - a. Peter would have certainly known the timeline by this time and understood that the catching away of the church preceded Daniel's Seventieth Week and the second advent and all things that followed.
 - b. Contextually, Peter was writing to saved believers (albeit Jewish believers specifically) and their end would be the blessed hope or what people commonly call the rapture of the church. It is understood from other passages that this kind of environment is what would plague the last days of the church age (1 Timothy 4:1-5; 2 Timothy 3:1-9).
 - c. Ultimately, the blessed hope for the church is the event that triggers the restarting of God's timeline with Israel and the unfolding of the remainder of the end-time events. It is likely that Peter had this in mind considering that he said, "the end of ALL THINGS."
 2. The closeness thereof—"the end...is at hand"
 - a. The phrase *at hand* is found thirty-two times in scripture.
 - b. In short, the phrase indicates that something is present or within reach (Genesis 27:41; 1 Samuel 9:8; Jeremiah 23:23; Matthew 26:45-46).
 - c. Specifically, Deuteronomy 32:35 identified something that was "at hand" as something that made haste to come.
 - d. In other words, Peter believed these saints were living in the last times and that their conduct should reflect that.
 - B. The Content of the Exhortation (1 Peter 4:7-9)
 1. Be ye therefore sober (1 Peter 4:7).
 - a. The cause of sobriety—"therefore"
 - (1) To some degree, the motivation of their need for sobriety is the motivation for each exhortation to follow.
 - (2) Specifically, however, they are told to be sober because "the end of all things is at hand."
 - b. The command for sobriety
 - (1) Understanding sobriety
 - a) Most people unfortunately limit the meaning of sobriety to the absence of alcohol, but scripturally speaking, the meaning involves a much broader scope.



- b) Sobriety is the opposite of being beside oneself (2 Corinthians 5:13) or mad (Acts 26:25) and is akin to being alert (1 Thessalonians 5:6).
 - c) The word *sober* is used in conjunction with the words *grave* (1 Timothy 3:11; Titus 2:2) and *temperate* (Titus 1:8; Titus 2:2) indicating that it is accomplished when one is in control, down to earth, and finds the proper balance in his thoughts and actions.
 - d) One who is sober is humble (Romans 12:3), not drunken (1 Thessalonians 5:7-8), and well aware of the circumstances surrounding him at all times (1 Thessalonians 5:6, 8; 1 Peter 5:8).
- (2) The end-times need for sobriety
- a) As time winds down, the need for sobriety increases.
 - b) Temptations are seemingly escalating from every angle and source.
 - c) Even if sin did not have the ability to lure away a believer, busyness and hobbies tug at his heart to steal away one's time and strength.
 - d) The Devil labours to keep the believer from working while it is day (John 9:4) knowing that a sober believer gets much more accomplished for the Lord.
 - e) While men are spiritually asleep (Matthew 13:25), the enemy has free reign to disrupt and destroy the lives of others.
 - f) The apostle Paul saw this dilemma and warned "that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Romans 13:11).
2. Watch unto prayer (1 Peter 4:7).
- a. The importance of prayer in difficult times
 - (1) Many of those in the world perceive prayer as a crutch or a tool that shows weakness.
 - (2) Yet, the saint of God knows prayer to be one of the most powerful weapons during times of war.
 - (3) As the Lord Jesus prepared to face the mob that would soon arrest Him, He spent His remaining time in earnest prayer (Matthew 26:36-46). It was during this time that He taught the disciples saying, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41).
 - (4) Prayer does not distract the believer from the battle at hand; rather, it strengthens him and aids him during even the fiercest parts of the battle.
 - (5) Prayer reminds the believer of who he is, who his enemy is, and it reminds him of the power of his God.



- b. The connection of watching and praying
 - (1) A good number of Bible passages connect watchfulness and prayer.
 - (2) While preaching sounds the trumpet of alarm in the ears of men, prayer sounds the alarm in the ears of God.
 - (3) As a watchman, each believer has a responsibility to his brother or sister in Christ. While some believers are spiritually sleeping, unaware of their present danger, other believers ought to be standing upon the tower of watchfulness and calling upon the Lord.
 - (4) This was the point of Paul's teaching in Ephesians 6:18 when he said, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."
- 3. Have charity among yourselves (1 Peter 4:8).
 - a. A general understanding of charity
 - (1) Defining charity
 - a) Charity is certainly love, but not merely what we would consider a standard type of love and certainly not like today's usage or definition.
 - b) Charity is a deeper, fuller, and stronger type of love.
 - (2) The character of charity (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)
 - a) It is kind (1 Corinthians 13:4).
 - b) It is humble (1 Corinthians 13:4).
 - c) It is honourable (1 Corinthians 13:5).
 - d) It is selfless (1 Corinthians 13:5).
 - e) It is peaceful (1 Corinthians 13:5).
 - f) It is righteous (1 Corinthians 13:6).
 - g) It is patient (1 Corinthians 13:7).
 - h) It is hopeful (1 Corinthians 13:7).
 - b. The importance expressed—"above all things have fervent charity"
 - (1) It is superior to spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 13:1-2, 9).
 - a) Superior to the gift of tongues (1 Corinthians 13:1)
 - b) Superior to the gift of prophecy (1 Corinthians 13:2)
 - c) Superior to Knowledge (1 Corinthians 13:2)
 - d) Superior to Faith (1 Corinthians 13:2)
 - (2) It is superior to good deeds (1 Corinthians 13:3).
 - a) Superior to selling all and giving to the poor
 - b) Superior to sacrificing life for a righteous cause
 - (3) It is superior to superior graces (Colossians 3:12-14).
 - a) Mercies (Colossians 3:12)
 - b) Kindness (Colossians 3:12)
 - c) Humbleness of mind (Colossians 3:12)
 - d) Meekness (Colossians 3:12)
 - e) Longsuffering (Colossians 3:12)
 - f) Forbearance (Colossians 3:13)
 - g) Forgiveness (Colossians 3:13)



- (4) It is the supreme addition in the Christian life (2 Peter 1:5-7).
 - a) Adding virtue to faith (2 Peter 1:5)
 - b) Adding knowledge to virtue (2 Peter 1:5)
 - c) Adding temperance to knowledge (2 Peter 1:6)
 - d) Adding patience to temperance (2 Peter 1:6)
 - e) Adding godliness to patience (2 Peter 1:6)
 - f) Adding brotherly kindness to godliness (2 Peter 1:7)
 - g) Adding charity to brotherly kindness (2 Peter 1:7)
- c. The beneficiaries expressed—“among yourselves”
- d. The reason expressed—“charity shall cover the multitude of sins”
 - (1) Charity seeks the others’ benefit.
 - a) Avoiding the destruction of other believers (Romans 14:15)
 - b) Ensuring others are not weakened (1 Corinthians 8:1-13)
 - (2) Charity seeks forgiveness and fellowship (1 Peter 4:8).
 - a) Love covereth all sins (Proverbs 10:12).
 - b) He that covereth a transgression seeketh love (Proverbs 17:9).
- 4. Use hospitality one to another (1 Peter 4:9).
 - a. What is hospitality?
 - (1) To understand hospitality, one ought to consider the root word *hospital*.
 - (2) A basic definition for the word hospital involves a shelter for the needy or a place where the sick can recover.
 - (3) Thus, hospitality involves taking others in, even for a short time, to strengthen them in some area of need.
 - (4) Hospitality can be as simple as sharing a meal together or it may require more effort and time.
 - b. The beneficiaries of hospitality
 - (1) Hospitality is something that is done “one to another.”
 - (2) This means it is an action that should be done to other believers.
 - c. The heart of hospitality—“without grudging.”
- C. The Accountability of the Exhortation (1 Peter 4:10-11)
 - 1. The general principle (1 Peter 4:10)
 - a. Believers are stewards of the manifold grace of God.
 - b. As stewards, everything in their possession and under their care belongs to the Master and not to the steward.
 - c. They had received the gift (likely referring to the grace of God) and were to, in return, minister the same one to another.
 - 2. The expounding of the principle (1 Peter 4:11)
 - a. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.
 - b. If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth.
 - 3. The working of the principle (1 Peter 4:11)
 - a. That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ
 - b. To whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever
 - c. Amen



II. EXHORTATIONS FOR BELIEVERS TO THE WORLD (1 Peter 4:12-19)

A. The Content of the Exhortation (1 Peter 4:12-13)

1. The incorrect response to trials (1 Peter 4:12)
 - a. The commonality of trials
 - (1) Think it not strange.
 - (2) As though some strange thing happened unto you.
 - (3) Obviously, problems are a reality of life.
 - a) The Lord cautioned concerning this truth when He said, “In the world ye shall have tribulation” (John 16:33).
 - b) Simon Peter echoed this sentiment in 1 Peter 4:12.
 - c) Problems, trials, and tribulations occur because of sin’s presence, and so long as sin remains within this world, men will face difficulties.
 - b. The nature of trials—“the fiery trial”
 - c. The purpose of trials—“which is to try you”
2. The correct response to trials (1 Peter 4:13)
 - a. The present
 - (1) Rejoice
 - (2) Inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings
 - b. The prospective
 - (1) When His glory shall be revealed
 - (2) Ye may be glad also with exceeding joy

B. The Caution of the Exhortation (1 Peter 4:14-16)

1. Should one be reproached for the name of Christ (1 Peter 4:14)
 - a. For the reproached
 - (1) Happy are ye.
 - (2) The spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.
 - (3) God is glorified.
 - b. For the reproacher—“on their part he is evil spoken of”
2. The causes for which one might suffer (1 Peter 4:15-16)
 - a. Evil doing (1 Peter 4:15)
 - (1) Let none of you suffer as a murderer.
 - (2) Let none of you suffer as a thief.
 - (3) Let none of you suffer as an evildoer.
 - (4) Let none of you suffer as a busybody in other men’s matters.
 - b. Right doing—“if any man suffer as a Christian” (1 Peter 4:16)
3. The varying responses to suffering (1 Peter 4:16)
 - a. For evil doing; The passage does not directly state what response should come from one who suffers for doing wrong; however, it is implied that one ought to be ashamed.
 - b. For right doing
 - (1) Let him not be ashamed.
 - (2) Let him glorify God on this behalf.



C. The Confidence of the Exhortation (1 Peter 4:17-19)

1. Laying the foundation
 - a. Up to this point, the context of this epistle has been that of suffering.
 - (1) At the hands of ungodly government (1 Peter 2:12-17)
 - (2) At the hands of ungodly employers (1 Peter 2:18-20)
 - (3) At the hands of ungodly spouses (1 Peter 3:1-7)
 - (4) At the hands of believers within the body (1 Peter 3:8-17)
 - (5) At the hands of old running mates (1 Peter 4:1-6)
 - b. Following these scenarios, the Lord reminded the believers of the importance of handling their fiery trials correctly (1 Peter 4:7-16).
 - c. At first glance, one would think that the next verse (1 Peter 4:17) takes on a new subject. The first word *For* suggests otherwise.
 - d. If we can receive it, the Lord is about to unveil a deep and profound truth—all the suffering that the saints have experienced at the hands of men coincided with a purifying judgment at the hands of the Lord. This judgment takes place during this lifetime and serves as a precursor for the judgment seat of Christ. It is no wonder that God expects us to properly handle these times of difficulty. After all, behind the human troublemakers is a caring and holy God.
2. The time of judgment (1 Peter 4:17)
 - a. The time is come
 - b. That judgment must begin
 - c. Note: Again, Simon Peter was speaking of a judgment preceding the judgment seat of Christ. The time of its arrival was here already, but it would serve only as the beginning.
3. The recipients of judgment (1 Peter 4:17)
 - a. Among the believers
 - (1) Judgment must begin at the house of God
 - (2) If it begin at us
 - b. Among the lost—“what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God”; Note: This question is not asked in hopes of finding the answer. In fact, the answer is given elsewhere (2 Thessalonians 1:8). Instead, it seems likely that the purpose is for the saved to consider the minor nature of their own judgment in comparison to what the lost will suffer.
4. The fierceness of judgment (1 Peter 4:18)
 - a. For the saved—“if the righteous scarcely be saved”; from a temporary fiery trial
 - b. For the unsaved—“where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear”; in an eternal fiery trial
5. The confidence in judgment (1 Peter 4:19; Hebrews 12:4-11)
 - a. The persons with confidence—“Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God”
 - b. The means of confidence—“commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing”
 - c. The reason for confidence—“as unto a faithful Creator”