

1Pet. 4:1 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

1Pet. 4:2 That he no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

Because Christ suffered for us in the flesh as the sacrifice for our sin, we should be prepared to do the same for Him. The second phrase of verse one seems to be equating suffering in the flesh to ceasing from sin. The more I think about it in that respect, the more it makes sense. Our natural tendency is to choose the things that are contrary to the teaching of Jesus that included dying to self, make yourself a servant to others, turn the other cheek, etc. It is a constant struggle for the believer to eliminate sin from his life. The reason for “suffering in the flesh” is to live our lives according to the will of God. We choose not to make the choices that feed our natural desire for the forbidden. (The Greek for the word “lusts” expresses a longing, especially for what is forbidden.)

1Pet. 4:3 For the time past of *our* life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:

Before we became followers of Jesus, we were content to do the things associated with the heathen, those who didn't have the teachings of God. Some of those things were:

- 1) Lasciviousness – licentiousness (lewd, lustful, unchaste, impure), filthy, wantonness (undisciplined, unrestrained)
- 2) Lusts – sinful desires
- 3) Excess of wine – drunkenness
- 4) Revellings – riotings (to feast in a riotous manner, without restraint, with lots of liquor)
- 5) Banquetings – drinking parties
- 6) Abominable idolatries – unlawful worship (according to the law of God)

These categories seem to overlap each other a lot. It would seem that one of the key differences in one who follows God and one who doesn't is self-control. The list above includes actions that are unrestrained, self-pleasing, and anything goes. God has no place of authority or respect in the life of those who practice such things.

1Pet. 4:4 Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with *them* to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of *you*:

1Pet. 4:5 Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

Those who live so totally focused on self don't understand why you, as a believer, don't want to live the same way they do. They are having fun. You are just a party pooper, a stick in the mud, a goody two shoes, a spoiled sport.

The word "who" is interesting in verse 5. At first reading, it would seem to refer to the closest noun, "you," referring to the believer. After reading the verse a couple of times, I've decided it doesn't matter, because all of us are going to stand in judgment before God—the quick and the dead. The *quick* would include those who are alive in the spirit and the *dead* would be those that are dead in the spirit. As believers, our lives will be judged to determine are rewards in heaven. Unbelievers, on the other hand, will be judged for condemnation to hell.

2Corinthians 5:10 "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

Revelation 20:12-15 "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

1Pet. 4:6 For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

The gospel has to be heard to be believed.

Romans 10:17 "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

We are all dead spiritually before we are born again through faith in Jesus. Our sin has to be judged just as surely as those who choose to reject God's gift. The difference is that Christ took the judgment for our sin and gifted us with His righteousness through His shed blood. Now we can live our physical lives according to God's will as taught in His Word through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit within us.

1Pet. 4:7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

There is a point when time will be no longer; eternity will begin. I realize the philosophers would argue my expression, but it's the way my human mind puts it into perspective. In other words, God has a plan for *this* earth and for mankind on *this* earth. The time will come when that plan will be completed, fulfilled. That time is drawing near, getting closer. (Whether it takes a few days or another 2,000 years, that is a true statement.)

Peter warns the believers to stay sober and “watch” unto prayer. Very interesting to me was the Greek for the word “watch.” It means to abstain from wine, keep sober, be discreet. The word for “sober” puts more emphasis on being of sound mind. Peter is telling us that it is important to stay clear of mind and focused in prayer as we watch and wait for God’s plan to come to fruition.

1Pet. 4:8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

While we watch and wait, our priority is to be fervent in charity. The word for *fervent* indicates “without ceasing.” This kindness/affection/love for one another is to be a regular part of our interaction with one another. This brings to mind another verse that has been a real inspiration to me:

Galatians 6:10 "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

Yes, we are supposed to be a light to the world and return good for evil and do good to all men—but especially those who are part of the family of faith, our brothers and sisters in Jesus. God has different areas of service for each one of us, and I have always been drawn more to minister to those in the household of faith.

1Pet. 4:9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

I liked the way good old Webster’s defines *hospitality*, “The act or practice of one who is hospitable; reception and entertainment of strangers or guests without reward, or with kind and generous liberality.” The definition for *grudging* includes, “to covet; to give with reluctance; to desire to get back again.” The whole mentality today centers on “What can I get out of it?” “How will this benefit me?”

This verse is just another statement that emphasizes the Lord’s teaching that we are to love one other with a servant spirit.

1Pet. 4:10 As every man hath received the gift, *even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

As I look over the Greek, I think it would read better to say, "As every person received gifting." We each receive different giftings according to the Spirit.

1Corinthians 12:7-11 "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

We are to use those gifts to serve one another. These gifts are ours through the grace of God. Usually I think of grace generally as one thing, but Peter is reminding us that God gives His grace to us in different ways. A good steward uses his given authority / abilities wisely / worthily to God's glory.

1Pet. 4:11 If any man speak, *let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

I think Peter is saying that we should only speak or serve as God provides the ability and opportunity. When we speak, it should be according to God's word. When we serve, it should be through God's enablement. Our motive in all we say and do should be to bring glory to God through Jesus Christ, the "author and finisher of our faith." (Hebrews 12:2)

John 15:5 "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

The last phrase is another one of those phrases that applies to both antecedents in the phrase before it—God and Jesus Christ. You can't separate One from the Other when it comes to deserving praise and exercising power and authority forever.

1Pet. 4:12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

"Beloved" – Peter is writing to people he cares about.

In context we have been talking about suffering for Jesus as He suffered for us. Peter is reminding his audience that the trials/testing/proving of our faith is to be expected. We tend to think that if we trust in Jesus and become His child, we will only experience the good things associated with that relationship. The truth is that while here on a decaying planet earth and living in this body born in sin and subject to the attack of the “god of this world,” we will experience bad/evil along with good/blessing. Christ has set the example and given us the Spirit to empower/comfort/guide us on our journey. Our focus is to be on the confident expectation of His coming and/or our going to Him. The beautiful truth to remember is that no type of “fiery trial” can touch us without the permission of the Father.

Romans 8:28 “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

1Pet. 4:13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

“rejoice” – be cheerful, calmly happy, well off

In other words, no matter in what circumstances we find ourselves as believers, we can have a heart of calm and happiness knowing that we are partakers/sharers in Christ’s sufferings. Obviously, Christ suffered alone on the cross, but the Man Jesus felt grief at the suffering of His friends when Lazarus died.

John 11:33-35 “When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. In that regard, I think He suffers with us as we choose to obediently endure according to His Word whatever trial/testing He allows in our life.”

What is the source of that calmness/happiness during suffering? We know that Jesus is coming back as King of kings and Lord of lords, and we will bask in the glow of His glory forever.

1Pet. 4:14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

Peter has so many ways of saying the same thing and emphasizing the truth he is teaching. We shouldn’t care if we are taunted/reproached because of our stand for

Jesus and the truth of His Word. In fact, it should make us happy to bring glory/honor to Him.

Only the unbeliever would speak evil of Jesus. The word for “speak evil of” is the word for *blaspheme*. How does Webster define blaspheme? “To speak of, or address, with impious irreverence; to revile impiously (anything sacred); as, to *blaspheme* the Holy Spirit.” This trait is so dominant in America today. Even those who claim to be His child use the name of God lightly and without reverence, e.g. “O my God.” This ought not to be. In fact, this verse should give one pause as you examine your life. Peter says that only unbelievers would speak in this manner.

2Corinthians 13:5 “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”

Exodus 20:7 “Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.”

1Pet. 4:15 **But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters.**

This really seems a strange statement to me to address to those who claim to follow Jesus. Peter is saying that none of them should be guilty of murder, theft, criminal behavior, or meddling in other people’s affairs. My thoughts are taking me back to the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5.

Matthew 5:21-22a “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.”

Matthew 5:43-44 “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.”

When you think of Peter’s warning as it applies to the attitudes/thoughts in our heart, it’s not so strange anymore. We may not be guilty of the physical commission of a sin, but we are guilty nonetheless for the attitudes/thoughts in our heart. That is very sobering. It certainly keeps me ever on my knees before the Lord. Paul affirms the truth of Peter’s message:

2Corinthians 10:5 "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

1Pet. 4:16 Yet if *any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.*

Men can shame or disgrace us publicly according to the eyes of the world; but if we are being mistreated because of our faith, we don't have to feel shame or disgrace. In fact, we should praise God for accounting us worthy as He did Job.

1Pet. 4:17 For the time *is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?*

As stated in the comments on verse 5 above, we will all face judgment before Almighty God. Peter is stating that believers/the family of God will be judged first. If God is determined to judge His children, how much more certain will be the judgment of those who reject Him and His Word.

1Pet. 4:18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

This is a hard verse. The wording indicates that the righteous will be saved / delivered / protected / preserved with difficulty and much work (from the Greek for "scarcely"). Because Jesus is the One that accomplished this work for us, it is not natural for us to think of it as something that was difficult and required hard work. The fact is that Jesus lived for 33 years as a man on this earth without sin. Yes, He had the guidance and empowerment of the Spirit, but so do we. Living a godly life in this wicked world is hard work. He experienced all the temptations that we face.

Hebrews 4:15 "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

I understand the last part of the verse by understanding that it is a contrast to the first part of the verse. The believer is saved through the work of the Savior, so where does that leave the ungodly, the sinner that rejects His gift of salvation? Condemned.

John 3:17-18 "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

1Pet. 4:19 Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls *to him* in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

When we suffer because we are following the example of Christ and being obedient to His Word (according to God's will), we can be confident that He will keep/preserve our souls to everlasting life. We can trust Him because He is the faithful (trustworthy, sure, true) Creator (author, manufacturer, source of origin).