

Why Bother?

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1Peter 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;

1Peter 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.

1Peter 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:

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

This era of mankind is that in which we are approaching conditions as they were in the days of Noah. The eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage of Noah's day, that Christ spoke of in **Mat. 24:38** were not habits and practices that were evil in themselves. Rather, Jesus was making a point about what humans were obsessed with in their worldly, carnal, self-absorbed lives. They were caught up in indulging in all the things that occupy the flesh. In that state of mind they were oblivious to spiritual peril and oblivious to the end of their world.

There is a similar attitude in the world today. People are obsessed with fleshly pursuits. It is all they know. It is all they care about. It is all that occupies their energies. There is no time for God. There is no time for spiritual considerations. There is no place for morals, ethics, principles that align themselves with a righteous God. Any show of morals or ethics by much of the world today has to do with making a good impression; or with influencing those who do have conservative values for the purposes of gaining power over them.

In a world where no value is placed on maintaining a set of scruples, or having a moral or ethical code that is based on more than personal gain and advantage, Christians need to re-examine why they would continue to defend the moral code of Jesus in a world that has re-defined that code. Christians also need to re-examine their own view of the principles of Christ to make sure they themselves have not corrupted the concept in their own lives.

The Holy Spirit through the pen of Peter helps us do that in our text today. He does that by pointing our thinking to the righteous principles behind why we as believers strive to overcome the tendency to sin; why we labor to purge ourselves from it, and what the experience of doing that does to us.

I. The first thing we may learn here by looking at the first verse is that overpowering or defeating the tendency toward carnality, **the human inclination to fulfil the ambitions of the flesh, is going to cause us suffering.** Vv. 1, last clause: "...he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin."

❖ The hardest thing for saved people to do is to squelch the tendency to spend all their time pursuing carnal goals; to bring the temporal life under subjection to do something as simple as read the bible or stop for a few minutes of prayer; to cut out some time to just sit down and

think about the things of God, the things of the Kingdom of Heaven.

- When we make our flesh stop its running after fleshly things, it causes bodily suffering...that is, it is the flesh that suffers...the spirit within us never does...but the flesh does...suffering because we have ceased from sin.
- We usually think about this idea from the viewpoint of not committing transgressions of the law; but there is more in this than that. To illustrate: It is sin to neglect the things of God because we want to do some pleasure thing. When our duty is to be involved in something like going to church, praying, studying the Word, contemplating God, witnessing to someone, if we trade that time for some earthly pursuit, we may be in transgression. On the other hand, if we reel that fleshly tendency to go and do that fleshly thing, we make the flesh to suffer...that is what is meant here..."he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin."
- This idea is captured by Paul in **Rom. 13:14** "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof*."

II. Now, if we back up just a moment to the first part of v. 1, we will notice that the Holy Spirit brings before us the fact of **where we should look for the incentive to purify our lives and to seek to be right** in God's eyes: v. 1: "Forasmuch then as **Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh**, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind:"

- ❖ One of the greatest incentives we can have to be willing to bring our flesh under subjection is to be reminded that Christ suffered in the flesh for us.
- ❖ To be incentivized we must consider and take on the mindset our Savior had when He went through His earthly ordeal: "...**arm yourselves** likewise with the **same mind**:"

III. Verse 2 & 3 teaches us the spiritual wisdom and prudence of bringing the flesh under subjection to spiritual things:

- ❖ V. 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."
 - The Lord's people have no business living and thinking like the world anymore, like they did before they were saved
 - This is what is indicated by the phrase "...live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men..."
 - The Lord's people should be studying to know what God's will is for their lives, and live according to that will.
 - See **Rom. 6:10-14**
- ❖ V.3: It is **expected of a person** who is **without Christ**, and so without spiritual guidance, **to live in excess of sin**; but **not so for the believer** - See **Eph. 2:1-3** "And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins. 2 Wherein **in time past** ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also **we all had our conversation in times past** in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

IV. V.7 **The final incentive and admonition**: "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."

- ❖ Keeping in mind what lies ahead helps us keep our spiritual perspective
 - The testimony about Abraham says it all: **Heb. 11:9-10** By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, **as *in a strange country***, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: 10 **For he looked for** a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.
 - The last word in **1Cor. 16:22** shows us the other side of this coin: "...Maranatha." Jesus Christ is coming with divine judgment!
 - A sane-mindedness is demanded; think soundly (suggests that people who pay no attention to the upcoming eternal future are insane; or at least mentally unstable)
 - Be alert to spiritual dangers and spiritual advantage by way of prayer
 - Prayer is the barometer of our spiritual condition
 - Prayer also attenuates us to spiritual things
 - Prayer results in God warning us about spiritual dangers without and within
 - Prayer opens the Divine Throne Room Door and engages the Holy Spirit to connect us with the treasures of the Lord