

How To Live Here Until We Leave Here

1 Peter 4:1 – 11

Proposition: We live here until we leave here by doing the will of God and serving for the glory of God.

Application: Reckon yourself dead to sin and alive to God. Engage in prayer as a daily discipline. Forgive the sin of others as often as you need to. Shoulder the responsibility of showing hospitality. Build other us with the gifts the Lord has given you in humility, with love, and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Introduction

Almost everything in life is *stoppable*. Gravity can be briefly suspended. Light can be brought to a complete stop. But one part of life cannot be halted. And that is *time*. Time marches on. It marches on toward the end of all things. As Christians we are to make the most of our time here on earth. We do so by living in the will of God and by serving for the glory of God.

I. By Living for the Will of God (4:1 – 6)

Prepared to Suffer (4:1): The same mind set that guided Jesus to face trials in His humanity should also be the mind set we have. The suffering of Jesus reached its peak as He was separated from His Father in those dark hours on the cross when He cried out *My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?* For the first and only time in His eternal being, Jesus was separated from His Father. This was the worst of His suffering –even greater than the pain of being nailed to a tree.

Just as soldiers prepare for battle; just as athletes prepare for a game; we prepare for suffering. One who suffers for righteousness's sake, who are reviled, ridiculed, mocked, those who endure unjust treatment for the sake of Christ Jesus prove they no longer live for sin but for the Saviour.

Illustration: Once there was a crew of sailors whose captain went insane. The crew obeyed the crazy man, because insane or not, he was their captain. There was only one problem. His leadership often ended in crisis. One night the crew nearly perished when the captain led them into a huge storm. The next morning, they made up their mind to no longer obey the crazy captain. They asked the most skilled crew member to become their new captain. Soon they ignored the orders of the old captain and followed the commands of the new captain. This course of action brought safety and success to the crew.

The story highlights what our union with the Lord Jesus is like. The old captain is our sin nature from whom we used to take orders. But in Christ Jesus we have died to sin, we no longer follow its commands. He is our New Captain whose leadership leads to new life.

Read Rom 6:6, 7

Since we have died with Christ Jesus the power sin has over our lives has been broken. .

To endure unjust treatment, we need to reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God.

Past Lifestyle (4:2, 3): Sadly, I lost 8 years of my life chasing pleasure. I wasted over 3000 days engaged in reckless living. Praise be to God those days are a closed chapter in my life. Now I live by to a new principle – the principle of dying to sin and living for God. Now I live with a new purpose – the will of God. Living for the will of God may include a degree of suffering but His will is pleasing, it is also good and perfect.

Read Rom 12:2

It is only as we die to sin and live for God; it is only as we yield our will to His that we discover, desire and delight in His good, perfect, and pleasing will.

Participating no More (4:4): I came to know the Lord in my first year of university. The next summer, I returned home to Quebec. My old friends asked me to attend a party. When I declined, they were shocked. Only a year before I was a leader in hosting parties. I was the one calling friends to go to out and have a few drinks. Now my friends could not grasp why I would deprive myself of fun. As a result, they mocked me. Ridiculed me. I became a social outcast. Even a former girlfriend thought I went off the deep end when I told her that I gave my life to Jesus. I had grown up with these people, but I learned they were not loyal friends after all.

The Christians to whom Peter was writing had withdrawn from pagan pursuits. Their friends were shocked that they no longer joined them in their sinful pursuit of pleasure.

When a person's conscience is defiled by a sinful lifestyle, they are not able to grasp why anyone would want to exchange the pursuit of pleasure for a life with moral restrictions. They express disdain by heaping verbal abuse on Christians. They see us as a bunch of *killjoys*. Our very presence is not welcomed. Our lifestyle may trouble a person's defiled conscience. As a result, they seek freedom from the restraint imposed by a Judeo-Christian ethic. Christians are called a danger to Democracy and Western values because we defend the lives of the unborn.

Read Esther 3:8, 9a

Put on Trial Before the Judge (4:5, 6): But soon the tables will turn. Those who treat God's people unjustly will in the end be called to give an account for their deeds.

Not to take Jesus as Saviour, is to meet Him as Judge. There will be no escape in the Court of Divine justice. So let us be careful not to compromise our faith to escape persecution.

Transition: We live here until we leave here by doing the will of God. We also live here until we leave here by serving for the glory of God.

II. By Serving for the Glory of God (4:7 – 11)

Prayers (4:7): Peter now describes how to live wisely in view of the Lord's return. The time between the first and second coming of the Lord Jesus is called the *last days*. We have been in the last days for over 2000 years.

Read Heb 1:2

The end has drawn near because the *last days* have already begun. All that remains is the epilogue of history, which includes the rapture, tribulation, and millennial reign.

When living in the *last days*, prayer is the normal and expected discipline of the Christian. To pray effectively and intelligently in our public and private prayers, we need to be clear-minded and self-controlled.

Transition: While living in the last days, prayer should be a daily discipline for the Christian. Showing love and practicing hospitality should also embody Christian living.

Practice love and hospitality (4:8, 9): Notice the phrase *above all*. Love is of utmost importance in our relationships with each other. The Greek word for such love is *agape*.

Agape is not based on warm fuzzies. It is not centred on the merit of object loved.

Agape is an act of the will. It is the love of choice. It promotes peace and unity in the Body of Messiah.

The phrase *keep fervent in your love* suggests *agape* can be stretched out – like a rubber band. It can be enlarged. It can grow. We are not to be stingy in *agape* rather we are to stretch it out to the max as the Spirit of God allows.

Read Matt 18:21, 22

Just as a band aid covers a wound, love covers sin. This does not mean our love *atones* for sin. Only God can atone for sin. Nor does it mean that love *condones* sin. What it does mean is that when there is *agape* between two people, should one be offended by the sin of another, the one will overlook the sin of the other by forgiving them.

To cover sin also means love does not broadcast the sin of others.

Read Gen 9:20 – 23

Ham should have covered Noah's nakedness and kept the matter to himself. Instead, he publicly broadcast Noah's sin to his brothers.

Transition: Just as we are to love each other we also show love to the stranger through hospitality.

In Bible times, hospitality allowed the Gospel to spread quickly. When preachers visited a region it was expected believers would open their homes and offer food and lodging to the missionary. The inns were often occupied with drunken guests and so were not pleasant places for evangelists to stay.

The problem with hospitality is that a guest may stay for some time and become a burden to the host. The host may be tempted to privately complain about the guest.

At times showing hospitality is hard. Yet by the grace of God, we can be cheerful about it and shoulder the responsibility with others.

Transition: Peter now moves on from mutual love to mutual service. Love and service are joined at the hip.

Perform Spiritual Service (4:10, 11): Notice the phrase *each one*. Every Christian has at least one gift they have received from God either at birth or at re-birth. The Holy Spirit can take *natural talents* and sanctify them for the Lord to use.

The type of service we offer is governed by the gift we have received. It is the duty of each Christian to explore his or her gift and employ it for the common good of others.

In ancient Israel a steward was responsible for managing the entire estate of his master according to the will of his master. The steward owned no part of the estate.

In the same way we are not to view ourselves as owners of spiritual gifts but as stewards. As wise stewards we employ our God-given gifts according to His will to build others up, not to enrich ourselves.

The root word for *grace* (charitos) is also the root word for *spiritual gifts* (charisma).

Gifts are given to us not because we deserve them but because of God's grace.

We display the diverse nature of the grace of God, as we wisely steward the varied gifts entrusted to us by the Lord,

Peter lists two broad classes of spiritual gifts. Some gifts involve *speaking*, such as the gift of teaching, the gift of evangelism, the gift of prophecy. Other gifts involve *serving*, such as the gift of mercy, the gift of helps, the gift of administration, the gift of healing.

As a rule of thumb, *if we do not have a speaking gift, we most likely have a serving gift.*

Speaking Gifts: Those who have speaking gifts, are not to declare their own opinion they speak on behalf of God. They do not offer new revelation. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they speak according to what has already been revealed in Scripture.

Although the words are spoken by a person, the message is from the Lord rooted in His Word and suited for the occasion.

Read Jer 23:22a

Serving Gifts: This refers to all types of service that does not involve speaking as the main action. The focus is works not words.

Just as a movie producer supplies all needed resources to pull off a first-class production, so the Holy Spirit supplies all required resources both spiritual and material to overcome obstacles and bring the ministry to completion.

Seeking His Glory: Whether we speak, whether we serve, the exercise of all gifts should be motivated by love, it should be empowered by His Spirit.

In this way it will be clear that it is the Lord's doing. In this way the grace of God will be made known. In this way God will be glorified in Christ Jesus.

Conclusion

Next Sunday marks 50 years since the birth of PBC. For 50 years PBC has been on a mission *to be a family of believers seeking to glorify God*. As we look to the future, how can we remain faithful in our God given mission to glorify Him?

1. By reckoning ourselves dead to sin and alive to God.
2. By engaging in prayer as a daily discipline.
3. By forgiving the sin of our brother or sister in Lord as often as we need to.

4. By shouldering the responsibility of showing hospitality.

5. By building each other another up with the gifts the Lord has given us in humility, with love, and by the power of His Spirit.