

GOOD STEWARDS of GOD's GRACE

1 Peter 4:7-11

Genesis 39:1-6; Matthew 25:14-30



A Letter to Saints (1 Peter 1:1-2)

- A letter to PILGRIMS and STRANGERS.
- A letter to the ELECT of GOD.
- A letter to SUFFERING SAINTS.
- A letter to warn of GREATER persecution.
- A letter to US. (Romans 15:4)

Christ: Our Example (1 Peter 2:21-25)

- Christ warned us and exhorted us to “count the cost” of following Him.
(John 15:18-20; Luke 14:28)

Arm Yourself (1 Peter 4:1-6)

- The Christian life is pictured in the New Testament as a BATTLE to FIGHT (Ephesians 6:10-18; 2 Timothy 4:7; 2 Timothy 2:3-4) and a RACE to FINISH and WIN. (2 Cor 9:24-27; Acts 20:22-24; Philip 3:12-14)
- The Christian life is NOT an EASY life. (Matthew 7:14)
- The Holy Spirit, GOD, moved Peter to write that Christians need to “arm themselves with weapons” to prepare the daily battle that must be won.
- Peter tells us of four weapons that are mandatory to fight the battles of “unjust suffering” in today’s world:
 - ① (v. 1) The Same Purpose (mind, thought, attitude) of Christ.
 - ② (v. 2) Commitment to Do the Will of God.
 - ③ (vv. 3-5) Run a Different Race
 - ④ (v. 6) The Hope of the Inheritance that Awaits Us

The End of All Things (1 Peter 4:7)

- We are living in the “last days”. (1 John 2:18-19; Rom 13:12; Heb 1:1-2; 10:25; 1 Corinthians 10:11)
- According to God, how would the “last days” look?
 - 2 Timothy 3:1-5 - What the “church” will look like.

- Luke 17:26-29 – The same as Noah's and Lot's time before the flood and destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.
- 2 Peter 3:3 – There would be scoffers or mockers.
- 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3 – Every one will be saying, "'Peace and safety', then sudden destruction comes. . ."
- 2 Thessalonians 2:3 – A great falling away!
- 1 Timothy 4:1-3 – Many will follow deceitful counterfeit doctrines.
- 2 Timothy 4:3-4 – Many will not desire sound doctrines but will find teachers that will flatter them. (Rom 16:17-18; Col 2:4, 8)
- "at hand" is "approaching"; "to bring near"
- First century saints expected the soon return of Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17)
- What does God exhort us to be busying doing as we long for His return?
 - ① Watch. (Luke 12:35-44; Philippians 3:20-21)
 - ② Be stewards of God's Grace. (Luke 12:35-44)
 - ③ Assembling more and more together. (Hebrews 10:25)
 - ④ Conduct ourselves in holiness in all that we do. (1 Peter 1:15-16; 2 Peter 3:11-13)
 - ⑤ Purify ourselves just as He is pure. (1 John 3:2-3; 2 Cor 7:1)
 - ⑥ Redeeming the time. (Ephesians 5:15-17)
- Christ taught that only those who endured to the end would be saved. (Matthew 24:13-14; 10:22)
- We have to seriously ask ourselves the question Christ put before His disciples, "When the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8)
- Do we believe that Christ will come today? (Luke 12:40)

Arm Yourself - Part 2 (1 Peter 4:7-11)

- ★ (1 Peter 4:7) "the end of all things is *at hand!*"
- ★ Disciples CAREFULLY watch for Christ's coming! (See "watch" in Luke 12:35-40)
 - ① Their waists are girded and their lamps burning. (v. 35)
 - ② They EAGERLY wait for their LORD! (v. 36)
 - ③ They continually, carefully, WATCH. (vv. 37-39)
 - ④ They continually prepare themselves to be READY at any time! (v. 40)

THEREFORE . . .

- ⑥ (1 Peter 4-7) Be Serious or Sober - *SWfroneW* sophroneo {so-fron-eh'-o} which means "be sober-minded"; "keep your mind steady and clear"; "control one's passions or emotions"; "self-controlled"
 - We must "guard our minds (hearts)" as a first priority (Prov 4:23)
 - We are commanded not to be transformed by the world, but renew our minds. (Romans 12:1-2)
 - Our minds must be focused on what our MASTER has taught us. (Joshua 1:8; Matt 6:33; Col 3:1-3; Titus 2:11-12; Isaiah 26:3-4)

- Our minds are either molded by His Word or the world. (Psalm 1:2; 19:7; 119:97, 103, 105; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

⑥ (v. 7) Be Watchful in Prayer

- "sober-mindedness" will lead to being watchful in prayer.
- Christ's instruction to His disciples in the Garden. (Matt 26:41)
- The opposite of being watchful in prayer is laziness, idleness, sleeping. Peter understood the difference. (1 Thess 5:6-8; Matt 26:43-45; Rom 13:11-14; Jonah 1:6; 1 Cor 15:34; Eph 5:14)
- "Watchfulness" means "alertness" – "sober-mindedness".
 - See 1 Peter 5:8
- Believers read and meditate on God's Word and pray daily. (Psalm 1:2; Matthew 6:9-13)
- We are commanded to "pray without ceasing". (1 Thess 5:17-18; Romans 12:12; Colossians 4:2; Philippians 4:6)
- Disciples pray CORPORATELY! TOGETHER!
- ★ Join us in our study, "PRAYER 101 - the ABC's of Prayer"
- Christ taught that we ought ("are obligated"; responsibility; duty) to "pray always." (Luke 18:1)

⑦ (v. 8) Love One Another Fervently - ABOVE ALL THINGS . . .

- ★ READ 1 John 5:1-2. Disciples love ALL fellow disciples.
- This needs to be true every day, but absolutely necessary during persecution.
- "fervent" is **ektenhj** ektenes {ek-ten-ace} and means "to stretch out" – it has the idea of a runner "stretching out at the finish line to win the race" – It say, love the brethren with ALL you have!
- (John 13:34-35) Jesus gave us the command to "love one another *just as* He loves us." (Eph 5:25;)
- (1 John 3:16) Christ laid down His life for us, therefore we ought (responsibility; duty; obligation) to lay down our lives for the brethren.
- Believers do not love only in word, but in deeds. (1 John 3:17-18)
- The verb is PRESENT TENSE; ACTIVE VOICE; PARTICIPLE – it translates literally, "keep on loving".
- "covers multiple sins"(Proverbs 10:12) – Believers are grieved at the sins of fellow brothers and sisters (1 Corinthians 13:6)
BUT . . .
 - ♥ Love suffers long. (1 Corinthians 13:4)
 - ♥ Love endures all things. (1 Corinthians 13:7)
 - ♥ Love does not gossip. (1 Corinthians 11:13)
 - ♥ ♥ ♥ "Love never fails" – 1 Corinthians 13:8.
 - ♥ Love forgives just as one is forgiven. (Ephesians 4:32)
- **WARNING of NOT LOVING!** (1 Jn 2:9-11; 3:14-15; 4:7-8, 20)

⑧ (v. 9) Be Hospitable

- "hospitable" is **filoxenoj** (philoxenos) and means literally "love of strangers". (See Hebrews 13:2)

- Christian love extends beyond one's Christian friends, but also to fellow believers who are "strangers."
- "one another" signifies that Peter is speaking of fellow believers and not just any stranger.
- Serving "strangers" is to be done "without grumbling!"
- ⑨ (vv. 10-11; Romans 12:3-8) Be Good Stewards of God's Grace
 - (v. 10) We are to be good stewards of the manifold grace of God.
 - Good: excellent, surpassing, precious, commendable
 - ★ Matthew 25:14-30; 2 Corinthians 5:9
 - "each one" – ALL Christians are recipients of God's grace.
 - ★ Ephesians 4:1-16
 - "gift" – God gives gifts. He does not offer gifts.
 - ★ God "assigns; equips; appoints" each true believer with gifts to be used within a local body - a local church. (Illustration: DNA)
 - "minister to each other" – Gifts are to be used to minister to others. NOT TO USE OUR GIFTS AND GRACE IN A LOCAL CHURCH IS GREAT SIN AGAINST GOD AND THE BODY OF CHRIST!
 - Steward: One appointed to manage or look after the property of another. (Joseph; Genesis 39:1-6)
 - ★ Grace belongs to GOD and is given to us. (1 Cor 15:10)
 - ★ Whatever we do we are to do with our whole heart unto the Lord! (1 Cor 10:31; Col 3:23)
 - Manifold: (Acts 17:25) Life (time - Eph 5:15-17), breath, and all things are GIFTS from God! They are expressions of His GRACE towards us! All that we have is from God and we are to be good stewards of them. (1 John 3:16)
 - Whatever talent, gift, resources, etc. which has been given to us we are to use it in serving God and others.
 - Remember our NT reading: Matthew 25:14-30. We will either hear:
 - "Well done good and faithful slave! (*doulos*)" (Matt 25:21, 23)
 - "I never knew you! Depart from Me!" (Matt 7:23; 25:30)
 - Paul *labored* because he received grace from God. (1 Cor 15:10)
 - Each member of the Body is to use his/her gifts for the edification of the Body. (Ephesians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 12:7)

What Must We Learn & Do

- ❶ Be sober-minded. Guard our minds. (Proverbs 4:23; Rom 12:2)
- ❷ PRAY - PRAY - PRAY - SERIOUSLY. (Romans 12:12)
- ❸ Be hospitable to one another. (Hebrews 13:2)
- ❹ Be GOOD Stewards of the grace given you to SERVE God and others. (Hebrew 6:10-12)
- ❺ DO EVERYTHING WITH YOUR WHOLE HEART UNTO THE LORD. (Colossians 3:17, 23; 1 Corinthians 10:31)