

The Attitude of Christ

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[0 : 00] Amen. Tonight we're going to move into the fourth chapter of 1 Peter!

and talk about unjust suffering and what we can do about it based upon Scripture. I'm going to read our passage out loud this evening.

We're going to cover 1 Peter 4, verses 1-6. Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking.

For whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but to live for the will of God.

For the time that has passed suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry.

[1 : 29] With respect to this, they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery and they malign you.

But they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the Spirit the way God does.

Peter in these six verses focuses a lot of attention on suffering, on persecution from the world, that persecution being directed at Christians, and even the possibility of death.

Now Peter himself was no stranger to these things. He of course witnessed the death of Christ on the cross. Many years later, he would experience the same type of death himself.

Peter himself was crucified on a Roman cross. And while we cannot prove this from Scripture, tradition says that Peter, at his request, was crucified upside down.

[3 : 03] Now that's never been proven by any authoritative inspired words, but supposedly Peter requested to be crucified upside down because he did not think himself worthy to be crucified in the same manner as our Lord.

It is obvious from the words in our passage this evening that the Holy Spirit wants believers through the ages to know how to face such trials.

that is no less true in our day than it was in Peter's day. Armed with such knowledge, we will experience spiritual growth and our hearts will be joyful.

Well, why is it important for Christians to be joyful? Well, joy or being joyful is one of the pieces of evidence that we are one with Christ.

Remember the fruit of the Spirit? Things like love, joy, peace, and so forth? In our study this evening, Peter is going to call on believers to face persecution.

[4 : 37] It is to be done for righteousness' sake. There could be a time when some of us may face martyrdom for the sake of Christ.

And there are two key words found in these six verses that we are going to study tonight. And those two words are arm yourselves.

Arm yourselves. They are found in verse 1. In the Greek language, this is the only time this word, and it is one word in the Greek, but this is the only time this word appears in the New Testament.

And it pictures a soldier preparing for battle. Peter, himself, no stranger to persecution and eventual martyrdom, will give us four elements of arming ourselves.

These four elements are as follows. The attitude of Christ, the will of God, the transformation from the past, and the hope of eternal life.

[6 : 02] And tonight, the first thing we are going to look at is the attitude of Christ. That's covered in 1 Peter 4.1, which we have already read.

I am going to read it again. 1 Peter 5.1, Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in flesh has ceased from sin.

Interesting words. Now that word, therefore, and we've covered this many times, that takes us back to Peter's words in the preceding passage.

The apostle explained how the Savior endured great suffering. Obviously, the Lord suffered great physical pain, but the real suffering was His ultimate, though temporary, separation from God.

That's where Christ suffered. We say that when from the cross the Lord cried out those words found in the Psalms. Psalm 22.1, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

[7 : 18] This was the Lord's great suffering, His greatest suffering, on the cross. He was separated for the first and only time in history from the Father. He suffered as a just for an unjust.

That suffering turned into His greatest victory. The cross was the Lord's great triumph. He triumphed over sin for all the world to believe.

He triumphed over hell. Hell could not hold Him. He triumphed over the power of death. Death could not keep Him.

And He triumphed over Satan and every demon that exists. Christ suffered Christ died.

Christ suffered in the flesh. Christ died. The Father who made Him who knew no sin came to no sin.

[8 : 37] sin. But it was imputed to Him. It wasn't His sins. He never sinned. Just as we were imputed with His righteousness, He was imputed with our sins.

And Christ redeemed us from the law. On the cross, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.

In fact, it is written in Galatians chapter 3 verse 13, cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree. A very famous passage drawn from, loosely speaking, from Deuteronomy.

There are other words found in the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy in chapter 21 verse 33.

His body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day.

For a hanged man is cursed by God. And people say, well, Jesus wasn't cursed. Well, yeah, He was. for our sakes.

[9 : 54] He took our punishment. He took it all. What was gained by the cross?

Well, for believers, He gained a salvation that can never be defeated. Never. for Himself, He gained everlasting honor and praise.

We'll be praising Him in eons in the future for what happened. That praise from angels and from saints will resonate from heaven and be heard throughout the universe, even, I think, down to the depths of hell.

those people in hell will hear the praises being offered for the Lord Jesus. In verse 1 of 1 Peter 4, the apostle tells us that we should arm ourselves.

That's very interesting language as we study our first point being the attitude of Christ. Remember the verse we were studying in the second part of verse 1, the attitude of Christ, arm yourselves also with the same way of thinking.

[11 : 31] That would be a great attitude to adopt from the Lord. Jesus knew and we should know that after the cross comes the crown.

There's a crown waiting. If you read Fox's book of martyrs, which I think should be required reading for entry into heaven, you will find out that most of the church martyrs knew this fact.

So what was the gain of the cross? Jesus gained for all the saved a salvation that can never pass away.

And Jesus gained for himself eternal honor and praise and blessing from all that dwell with him in glory.

And all we have talked about to this point concerns the cross. There are two statements in the gospel accounts. One positive, the other negative.

[12 : 41] Luke 9 23, and he said to all, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me.

on the negative side, we have his point from Matthew's gospel. Matthew chapter 10 verses 38 and 39, and whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Taking up the cross represents death.

Now, some say, well, it doesn't go quite that far. Well, if it doesn't, then at the very least, represents a willingness to die for the honor of Christ.

Christ. The Apostle Paul, like Peter, another martyr for Christ, understood this perfectly.

[13 : 57] The Apostle Paul understood it. Listen to his words in 2 Corinthians chapter 4 verses 8 to 12. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed.

perplexed, but not driven to despair. Persecuted, but not forsaken. Struck down, but not destroyed. Always carrying in the body the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Christ's sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

So death is at work in us, but life in you. How could so many thousands of martyrs face death with a willingness to die for Christ?

death? Well, they could face death because they had armed themselves with the same purpose that Jesus had.

[15 : 23] And that purpose was to be faithful to the Father regardless of what the cross would bring. God by dying on the cross once for all the saved, he proved his faithfulness to the Father.

By dying on the cross, we are freed from all of the effects of sin. we are also freed by the powerful influence of the devil and demons.

How is that possible? Because the Lord Jesus secured a total victory over sin and death that he passed on to his children.

Total victory. Now before we move on from looking at Christ's attitude, to the next element, I want to consider the power of sin that we face daily in this life.

Sin is ever-present in our life and why is that? How is that possible? Because guys, you always have to remember we live in unredeemed flesh.

[16 : 47] We're still in the battle and unredeemed flesh rises up or assaulted every day and every hour of every day as long as we live.

Again, I appeal to Paul in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 starting in verse 54, when the perishable puts on the imperishable and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin. And the power of sin is the law.

But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Well, the sting of death is sin.

The power of death is the law, but thanks be to God who has secured for us a victory. That victory from the Lord Himself.

[18 : 11] Next, we're going to look at the will of God. 1 Peter 4, verse 2. So as to live the rest of the time in the flesh, no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.

Ask yourself this question. It's an interesting question. What is sin? What is sin? Well, sin is disobedience to the will of God.

The late Dr. R.C. Sproul once said that all sin is cosmic treason against the living God. It's us living out our lives in rebellion to God.

The New Testament is filled with all kinds of warnings of disobeying God. Conversely, the New Testament exhorts all people to live in obedience to God.

Listen to the words of Jesus. This is on the Sermon on the Mountain. Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock and the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and beat on the house but it did not fall because it had been founded on the rock.

[19 : 48] And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand and the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and beat against that house and it fell and great was the fall of it.

Well, who then shall not enter the kingdom of God or those who did not obey God and His will? Even those who thought they were obedient yet they will not enter into the kingdom.

Matthew 7, 21 Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

And Paul said this in Romans 12, 2 Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind that by testing you may discern what is the will of God what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Paul wants us to arm ourselves with a commitment to do the will of God. Have you ever sat down with God and said, I'm going to do your will the rest of my life?

[21 : 30] Dangerous prayer. This is how Paul put it. Romans 6, verse 8 to 12 If we've died with Christ we believe we will also live with Him.

We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death He died, He died to sin.

Once for all, but the life He lives, He lives to God. So you almost consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Alive to God in Christ Jesus. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body to make you obey its passions. The third element we're going to discuss briefly anyway is the transformation from the past.

For the time that has passed suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do. What do the Gentiles want to do? We're all Gentiles. Living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, lawless idolatry.

[22 : 58] With respect to this, they are surprised when you do not join in the same flood of debauchery and they malign you. But they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

So there we have a description of the tragic pattern of a life that is not saved. Because the Holy Spirit has not done a work of salvation in this person, this life will end in judgment.

This type of life is over for the truly converted. It describes the former life of sin that leads to condemnation and eternity separated from God.

This is a description of the pattern of life. God's separation from His Son.

The life being described here is one of futility. And Peter uses six terms to identify the lost.

Sensuality, lust or passions, drunkenness, carousing, orgies, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.

[24 : 34] Sensuality describes those who engage in all sorts of unrestrained vice. It's the same word translated from Greek for debauchery.

Lust or passion are the sins that drive people into extreme indulgence. Drunkenness is a reference not just to intoxication, but habitual intoxication.

It can also refer to the adverse impact that drug usage has on a person. So there, it's interchangeable with drug abuse.

Carousing refers to participating in wild parties. orgies. Orgies are parties of carousing and end up in uncontrolled sexual misconduct of heterosexual or homosexual individuals.

Drinking parties, and I didn't even know that was in the scriptures until this lesson, is reserved for people who drink uncontrollably It's not uncontrollably with the goal of extreme intoxication.

[26 : 04] And abominable idolatries is the practice of immoral, debauched worship of false gods. And these were often accompanied by carousing and drinking parties.

The people that live this way will mock Christians and the church. And such people will give an account to the Lord for having treated His children in this manner.

In fact, He's ready, He says, to judge the living and the dead. Persecutors by unbelieving people face a terrible fate of judgment.

Paul gives this graphic description. Since indeed God considers it just to repay you with affliction those who afflict you and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know the Lord and those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus, they will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might.

Same word, power. Deutimus. We get dynamite from that. The apostle John had this to say in the book of Revelation chapter 20 verse 11 to 15 and then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it from his presence earth and sky fled away.

[28 : 16] no one was found for them and I saw the dead great and small standing before the throne.

The books were opened. Then another book was opened which is the book of life and the dead were judged by what was written in the books according to what they had done.

And the sea gave up the dead who were in it. Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them and they were judged each one of them according to what they had done.

Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death. The lake of fire, fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Picture that scene. He's got the book of the saved. Looks everybody up but most people aren't in there. So then he says, well, they actually in Revelation call it book of works.

[29 : 36] Let's see if your works equal salvation. And they always fall short. And the last element we're going to just briefly mention is the hope of eternal life.

You long for that? Oh, I do. For this is why the gospel was preached, even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does. 1 Peter 4, 6. If we are true followers of Christ, we should arm ourselves with the genuine hope of eternal life with Christ. We will ultimately overcome sin.

We will ultimately escape final judgment and we will ultimately enter into eternal life in holy perfection. salvation. This is why the gospel was preached, even to men now dead.

In the early days of the church, people went through frightening times. Many thought that the Lord had already returned and taken to heaven all that were going to be there.

[30 : 58] And those people saw in themselves no hope. no hope. They thought that they and other believers had missed the opportunity to obtain eternal life.

And that's why Paul wrote this in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. We do not want you to be ignorant, brothers.

Anytime you read that in the New Testament, mark it down, they were ignorant. That's a really nice way of saying, these guys are really ignorant. We would not want you to be ignorant or uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

died. And that's a word for died. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

[32 : 16] For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first, then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

Therefore, encourage or comfort one another with these words. most people will experience physical death, but their spirits remain alive and waiting for the time to enter into the promise of eternal life.

No enemy of Christ and no unjust persecution can rob believers of life with Christ forever. Paul understood this.

So, we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.

For this light, momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are unseen.

[33 : 44] For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. And Father, indeed, we thank You for the day, for Your grace and mercy, and that You are our soon returning King.

We don't know when that's going to happen. We don't know if it's in our lifetime, but it's going to be in somebody's lifetime. and what a day that will be.

Lord, may we look up, but may we occupy with Your work while we do. And may all that we do and say bring honor and glory to the Lord Jesus Christ.

We pray in His name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.