

How to Live When Your Faith is Under Fire

Series on the Book of 1 Peter

Message 9:

A Plea for Fervent Christian Living

1 Peter 4:1-6

We have been out of ***1 Peter*** now for almost as long as we were in it. For that reason, I want to remind you of some of what I said in the first message. We have seen in this book how Christians are to live differently than the world. We are to have different hopes. We are to think differently. We are to desire differently. We are to serve differently. We are to be model citizens even when we don't agree with our leaders. We are to have marriages filled with dignity and love and respect. We are to be different employers and employees, we are to be stewards of all God has given us. So, ***1 Peter*** speaks to us where we live today.

One commentator calls the Book of ***1 Peter*** "The most condensed New Testament resume of the Christian faith and of the conduct that it inspires." (E. Clowney, *The Bible Speaks Today*, 1 Peter).

Martin Luther considered ***1 Peter*** on par with Romans and the Gospel of John. He believed that it contains all that is necessary for a Christian to know.

The letter has a universal relevance seen in how it points out that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the foundational principle by which the Christian life is lived out within the larger unbelieving society.

I shared with you how I found this to be an interesting fact about ***1 Peter***: In areas of the world where Christians are going through heavy persecution, it is said that ***1 Peter*** is the most popular book in the Bible that they turn to for encouragement and hope and guidance. A specific example given of that is the Christian population in Indonesia, who live and work in a heavily Muslim country. The message of ***1 Peter*** is said to have tremendous appeal to them.

Karen Jobes, in her commentary on ***1 Peter***, cites other examples of both past and present times where persecuted Christians have turned to the book of ***1 Peter***. She says, "Peter writes to those whom he addresses as foreigners and resident aliens within the society in which they lived. He holds up Jesus Christ as the true outsider, coming into this world but being rejected and executed by it." She quotes another writer saying "The root of Christian self-understanding as aliens and sojourners lies not so much in the story of Abraham and Sarah and the nation of Israel as it does in the destiny of Jesus Christ, His mission and his rejection which ultimately brought him to the cross."

1 Peter is about you and me living as strangers and immigrants in a foreign land. This earth is not our home. We are strangers here. We are aliens. We are pilgrims. We are to be like Abraham, who the writer of Hebrews says was just "*passing through, he was a stranger in this land and was looking for a city whose builder and maker is God.*"

We begin a section today that is the heart and core of the book. When we last looked at *1 Peter*, we were looking at the suffering of Christ. Peter said in *3:18* ***“the just suffered for the unjust that He might bring us to God.”*** Christ’s suffering had a purpose. It was to redeem us. Also, His suffering was not the last chapter in His life, because after three days He was raised from the dead, and He now sits at the right hand of the Father.

As we get into *Chapter 4*, we will see that we are also called upon to suffer for our faith. And, we are assured that our suffering will have a larger purpose to it, and furthermore, we will see that suffering in the Christian’s life will not have the final say. In this section we learn that as a Christian, you may have to suffer unjustly for your faith, but know that God is able to reward you and to ultimately deal with those who may trouble you. Therefore, do not loose heart, and do not relax your biblical convictions or lifestyle.

1. PREPARE YOURSELF FOR A _____ OF _____
V.V. 1-2
2. SINFUL DESIRES BELONGED TO YOUR PAST WHEN YOU
WERE _____ IN _____ V. 3
3. GODLY LIVING WILL INCUR THE _____ OF THE
WORLD V.V. 4-5
4. THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL IS POWERFUL TO BRING
_____ V. 6