

# I Peter 4:1-11: Arm Yourselves with the Same Way of Thinking

Monday, January 07, 2013

4:50 PM

## Introduction

### A. Background

1. As we start this morning, I want to remind us where we are in I Peter
2. Premise: In the face of persecution we must return to the fundamentals of the gospel to remind ourselves of the significance of our salvation and the purpose of our salvation, which is to glorify Christ. Once we understand the significance and purpose of our salvation, we will be ready to understand how both the suffering of Christ and our suffering is leading to our ultimate glorification. Then we will be able to bear up under it in a way that brings glory to God.
3. We are nearing the end of the premise we are defending out of I Peter - we are in the third major section which is talking about the theology of suffering - how does the suffering of Christ and our own suffering lead to God's glory and our glorification?
4. We started this section two weeks ago by looking at I Peter 3:18-22, which looked at the suffering of Christ, and then skipped over our passage this morning and looked at I Peter 4:12-19, which looked at how suffering is leading to glorification
5. This week we are looking at the middle section - how does Christ suffering relate to our suffering?
  - a) This wasn't really the most optimal way of doing this, but Dan was gracious last week and covered my spot, so we'll make it work out

### B. Read I Peter 3:18-4:11

### C. Review I Peter 3:18-22

1. I Peter 4:1-11 builds directly on Peter's discussion of Christ's suffering in I Peter 3:18-22, so before we start looking at I Peter 4, I want to return to I Peter 3 for a few minutes to remind ourselves what has gone before
2. I Peter 3:18 starts by telling us that Christ suffered for righteousness - He suffered to make us righteous
3. Verses 19-20 then tells us that justification in Christ has been proclaimed through the Spirit of Christ just like in the days of Noah when Noah preached in the Spirit of Christ
4. In verse 21, we see that just as those saved in Noah's day were joined with Noah on the ark and brought safely through judgment, in Baptism we have been joined with Christ and have received the benefits of His suffering
5. Finally, in verse 22 it says that Christ has been glorified because of His suffering and since we are joined with Him we also look forward to glorification
6. So, we might say the emphasis of I Peter 3:18-22 is that ***Christ suffered for righteousness and we are participants in it*** - this is important to understand as we move into chapter 4

### D. Premise and Outline

1. Premise: Since Christ suffered for righteousness sake and we are participants in His suffering we ought to live that participation out in our lives - we must be willing to suffer for righteousness sake and we must act to produce righteousness in our lives
2. Outline
  - a) Arm yourselves with Christ (vs 1-2)
  - b) Reject human passions (vs 3-5)
  - c) Remember the purpose of salvation (vs 6, 11b)
  - d) Discipline yourselves in the fight against sin (vs 7-11)

## I. Arm Yourselves with Christ (vs 1-2)

Subpremise: When we arm ourselves with Christ we will be ready to participate in Christ's suffering in this life.

### A. Think the thoughts of Christ (vs 1a)

1. Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh
  - a) As we consider this first statement in I Peter 4:1, I want to recall what we decided the emphasis of I Peter 3:18-22 was - Christ suffered for righteousness and we are participants in it
    - i. You are participants in His suffering - Christ endured the suffering of God's wrath on your behalf
    - ii. You are participants in His resurrection - Christ's resurrection promises our resurrection
    - iii. You are participants in His glorification - Christ's glorification promises our glorification
    - iv. In a metaphysical sense, you have participated in every part of Christ's suffering
  - b) Here at the start of 4:1, Peter moves us into the next logical thought - if we have participated in the suffering of Christ we ought to be participating in the suffering of Christ - that is, the suffering of Christ ought to be lived out in our lives - suffering for righteousness, resurrection to God and glorification ought to be being lived out
  - c) Since Christ suffered for the sake of righteousness, we also must suffer for the sake of righteousness
2. Arm yourselves with the same way of thinking
  - a) Peter says this thought is something we must arm ourselves with - something we must put on beforehand to prepare us to meet the enemy, which is suffering here in I Peter
  - b) The word 'arm yourselves' is similar to the word that Paul uses in Ephesians 6
  - c) Ephesians 6:11 - *Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.*
  - d) What do we arm ourselves with? The thoughts of Christ
    - i. Thinking the thoughts of Christ is a common theme of Scripture
      - i) Philippians 2:5 - *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus*
      - ii) I Corinthians 2:16 - *"For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.*
    - ii. Specifically, here, we put on Christ thoughts about suffering
      - i) Christ viewed suffering as the way to defeat sin
      - ii) Christ viewed suffering as the way to glorify God
      - iii) Christ viewed suffering as the path to His ultimate joy
      - iv) Christ viewed suffering as necessary because of these things - it was the way to defeat sin, the way to glorify God, and the path to ultimate joy
    - iii. So, we must think about suffering in these same ways - we must put on the thoughts of Christ

### B. Suffering to cease from sin (vs 1b)

1. As Peter continues his sentence, he makes a powerful statement about the purpose of suffering in our lives - suffering ought to cause the defeat of sin in our lives
  - a) Suffering defeats sin in our lives in two ways
2. We must realize that our participation in Christ's suffering defeats the dominion of sin in our lives
  - a) Romans 6:6-7 - *We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin*
  - b) Galatians 5:24 - *And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*
  - c) Christ suffering has already defeated the power of sin in our lives - we no longer need to obey the desires of sin because Christ has defeated its dominion
3. We must be ready to suffer like Christ for righteousness in order to defeat the remaining allure of sin in our lives
  - a) Hebrews 12:3-4 - *Consider him [Christ] who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.*
  - b) When we arm ourselves with the desires to suffer for righteousness like Christ did, then sin has no power that it can exercise over us
  - c) Sins continuing power over us is in tempting us to satisfy our fleshly desires and to prevent any suffering from happening to us, but when we refuse this and instead purpose to suffer for righteousness - suffer by denying the flesh and suffer by allowing persecution to happen to us - then sin loses its allure

4. So, the purpose of suffering is to destroy the power of sin in our lives
  - a) Christ's suffering destroyed the power of sin in our lives
  - b) Our suffering destroys the power of sin in our lives

### C. Rising to do the will of God (vs 2)

1. Moving into verse 2, Peter makes another purpose statement about suffering - not only is it to defeat the power of sin in our lives, it is also to cause us to live according to the will of God
2. As we move through this first sentence in I Peter 4, I think there are strong parallels to what happened in II Peter 3:18-22 - we can see these if we skip over the discussion of Noah and baptism in the center
  - a) Christ suffered in the flesh but was made alive in the Spirit
  - b) Christ was resurrected (in the flesh) to the glory of God and His own glorification
  - c) Christ has entered into heaven and has triumphed over all His enemies
3. Peter then works these same three things out in the life of the believer
  - a) We have just seen that we too must suffer in the flesh to be made alive in the spirit - this is going to be an important phrase that basically means that as we endure suffering in our bodies our souls are purified from sin
  - b) After His suffering, Christ was also made alive in His flesh through His resurrection - after our suffering, we too continue in the flesh - and we follow Christ's example, we live to God
4. II Corinthians 5:14-15 - *For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.*

## II. Reject Human Passions (vs 3-5)

Subpremise: When we reject human passions we will be suffering for righteousness like Christ did.

### A. We must not participate in the world's rebellion against God's will (vs 3)

1. Peter makes two things clear about our involvement in the world in this first verse
  - a) There is no need for us to participate any more in the things of this world
  - b) The things of this world are given over to sin
2. There is no need for us to participate any more in the things of this world
  - a) The phrase here might confuse us, 'the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do'
  - b) We might think that means there is an amount of sin that we ought to participate in, but we just have reached that
  - c) I think the translation of the phrase obscures the meaning - the word suffices means something like when a parent says to a rebelling child, 'Enough!' - the parent isn't saying that the child has now done enough of the rebellion and can now stop, but rather that the child should not do any more
  - d) So, it means that we should not be participating in the things of the world anymore
3. The things of this world are given over to sin
  - a) Peter characterizes what the Gentiles want to do with six words: sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties and lawless idolatry
  - b) In other words, Peter characterizes worldly desires as explicitly sinful - the world is given over to sin, this is why we no longer participate in it
  - c) As we think through the list that Peter gives, we understand it well - it is amazing that after 2000 years, the things that the world is given over to are still the same, our culture also participates in all these things and rejoices in them
4. It is the same message that Paul gives in Ephesians 4:17-19 - *Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.*

**B. The world will persecute you for failing to rebel against God (vs 4)**

1. In verse 4, Peter makes two things clear about the world's reaction to us
  - a) The world will not understand our refusal to participate in their rebellion
  - b) The world will persecute us for our refusal to participate in their rebellion
2. The world will not understand our refusal to participate in their rebellion
  - a) Listen to the start of verse 4, "*With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery*" - the world is surprised when we don't join them in their rebellion
  - b) The world does not understand why a follower of Christ would reject the passions of the flesh and instead accept suffering according to the will of God - in fact they cannot
  - c) Romans 8:5-8 - *For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*
  - d) I Corinthians 2:14 - *The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.*
  - e) So, when we reject human passions we should expect people to be surprised - they won't understand what we are doing or why we do it - if people aren't at least somewhat surprised by our lives, it is likely that we aren't living for Christ like we ought to
3. The world will persecute us for our refusal to participate in their rebellion
  - a) Peter goes farther than just saying that they'll be surprised at our behavior, though, he says that they will malign our behavior - they will persecute us because we don't participate in their rebellion
  - b) Peter's telling his audience why they are suffering persecution - it is because the world doesn't understand them - the world doesn't understand their salvation, the world doesn't understand their savior, the world doesn't understand their lifestyle, so they persecute it
  - c) The world will always persecute those who are rejecting their lifestyles - Paul promised us as much
    - i. II Timothy 3:12 - *Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,*
  - d) So, we shouldn't be surprised when we are persecuted for not participating in the world's lifestyle, in fact we should expect it

**C. The world will be judged for their rebellion and persecution (vs 5)**

1. Peter closes this little section by reminding the persecuted believers that though they are being persecuted, God is still the ultimate judge
2. All men will have to face God for judgment, even those who may be persecuting us
3. This ought to be a great encouragement to us in persecution
  - a) It encourages us that the persecutor is not ultimate himself - he will be subjected to God at the end
  - b) It encourages us not to give in to the persecutor because God will judge us at the end
4. So Peter closes by reminding them that God is judge
  - a) If we are following Christ, we must not participate in the world
  - b) When we refuse to participate in the world, the world will persecute us just like they persecuted Christ - we will be suffering for righteousness like Christ suffered for righteousness
  - c) But when it seems like the persecutor is winning, we should remember that God is the final judge - He will bring men's deeds back on their head and will right every wrong

### III. Remember the Purpose of Salvation (vs 6, 11b)

Subpremise: When we remember the purpose of salvation we will understand our suffering rightly.

#### A. The purpose of salvation is to make you righteous (vs 6)

1. As we go through this passage this morning, everything in the passage more-or-less makes sense and flows nicely until we get to verse six, where, at least if you're me, you say, 'what?'
  - a) But I think that verse six still fits into Peter's train of thought very well - and it centers on a theme that Peter has been developing through this entire section since the end of chapter 3
  - b) In 3:18, Peter talks about Christ who died in the body but was made alive in the Spirit
  - c) Now in 4:6, Peter returns to talk about being dead in the body but made alive in the Spirit
  - d) He's really continuing his thought from verse 1 - we should be like Christ
    - i. In verse 1, we should be like Christ in how we suffer
    - ii. In verse 6, we should be like Christ in our life in the Spirit
2. What does life in the Spirit mean?
  - a) I think we see the clearest explanation of what life in the Spirit means for the Christian in Romans 8
    - i. Romans 8:5, 9-15 - *For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit...You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"*
  - b) Life in the Spirit means we have defeated death
    - i. We have defeated death in defeating sin - life in the Spirit means freedom from sin and living to righteousness
    - ii. We have defeated death in anticipation of resurrection - life in the Spirit means that we will be raised like Christ
  - c) So, Peter says, just like Christ, we are given life in the Spirit - life that conquers sin and produces righteousness in us and life that looks forward to resurrection even after we have died
3. So, why is the gospel preached?
  - a) Peter tells us at the beginning of verse 6 - 'for this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead...'
  - b) At the end of verse six Peter explains himself a little clearer - the gospel is preached in order to give life in the Spirit - to make people triumph over sin and death
  - c) But, the beginning of the verse refers back to something - 'for this is why'
  - d) It refers back to everything we've talked about
    - i. The gospel was preached so that people would suffer like Christ and cease from sin
    - ii. The gospel was preached so that people would reject worldliness like Christ did
    - iii. The gospel was preached so that people would be raised to life like Christ was
  - e) So, the gospel has been preached from the ascension of Christ until the day Peter wrote this in order to make people righteous before God and give them a hope of resurrection
    - i. This is why Peter mentions those who are dead - the gospel was preached to make them righteous so now, even though they are dead, they still have life in the Spirit and are looking forward to a final resurrection
  - f) If those who are dead are looking forward to resurrection because they were made righteous by the gospel, then those of us who are living must strive after the purpose of the gospel - making us righteous - and not give in to worldly things

## B. The purpose of salvation is to glorify God (vs 11b)

1. Peter ends this passage with a glorious doxology that draws us back into the primary purpose of salvation - the purpose of salvation is to make God glorified in everything through Jesus Christ
2. How is God glorified?
  - a) God is glorified through Jesus Christ
  - b) That is, everything that Christ has done will work to the glory of God the Father and one of the things Christ has done has empowered us to serve each other
  - c) When we serve each other in the gospel we are demonstrating the power of Christ in our lives which then glorifies God
  - d) Another thing Christ has done is given us power to defeat sin in our lives
  - e) When we fight against sin and defeat it we are demonstrating the power of Christ in our lives which again brings glory to God
3. Why is God glorified?
  - a) Because glory belongs to Him - *To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen*
  - b) God deserves glory - He is the sovereign, omnipotent Lord of the universe
  - c) God will be glorified because God deserves to be glorified and we ought to rejoice greatly in His glory
4. What does this mean for us?
  - a) It means that we must set aside other thoughts about the purpose of our salvation - our salvation is not for us to sit back and relax in, our salvation is not to honor us, our salvation is not to be simply a quick fix for all of our problems - our salvation is to bring glory to God
  - b) This ought to motivate us to suffer like Christ because we know our suffering is bringing God glory, this ought to motivate us to fight for righteousness because we know our fighting is bringing God glory

## IV. Discipline Yourself in the Fight against Sin (vs 7-11a)

Subpremise: When we discipline ourselves, both individually and corporately, we will bear up under suffering to the glory of God.

### A. The end is imminent (vs 7a)

1. In verses 5 and 6, Peter discusses the judgment of God - God's judgment will fall on those who reject His rule and live in sin and persecute the righteous - God's judgment will also fall on the righteous, but they have been made alive in the Spirit
2. In verse 7, Peter calls us to remember that this judgment is right around the corner - we must prepare ourselves for this judgment now
3. Peter puts this statement in here because he is about to call us to discipline ourselves in the fight against sin - we must discipline ourselves because God's judgment is imminent
  - a) The reminder that God's judgment is imminent protects us against desiring to go back to the ways of the world - those things will be judged by God in only a very short time
    - i. Ephesians 5:5-7 - *For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not become partners with them*
  - b) The reminder that God's judgment is imminent protects us against despairing in our fight - in only a short while God Himself will return and win the fight
    - i. James 5:8 - *You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.*
  - c) So, this reminder ought to spur us on in the disciplines Peter is going to enjoin

**B. We need to exercise personal discipline in fighting against sin (vs 7b)**

1. The first set of disciplines that Peter calls us to in our fight against sin are personal disciplines, those disciplines that each of us must exercise individually
  - a) There are three disciplines that Peter mentions here - prayer, self-control and sober-mindedness
2. Prayer is of utmost importance in our fight against sin
  - a) Just consider Christ's propensity for prayer - Christ was God Himself and was perfect, and yet He resorted to prayer often
  - b) Mark 1:35 - *And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.*
  - c) Prayer shows our total reliance on God in our fight against sin and it is through prayer that God blesses with His Spirit to give us power against sin
  - d) Therefore we should follow the example of Christ and devote ourselves to prayer - we should set aside time each morning to commune with our Lord and Master, our gracious Father
  - e) We should spend our day in communion with God - we ought to pray throughout the day and at all times as Paul enjoins us
  - f) Without being disciplined to pray we will never win the fight against sin
3. Self-control and sober-mindedness are essential for our prayers to be effective
  - a) Self-control means we control the actions that our bodies do - we do not allow our bodies to be given over to sin or fruitless activities
  - b) Sober-mindedness means we control the thoughts that our mind has - we do not allow our minds to be given over to sin or fruitless thoughts
  - c) Peter says we must discipline our actions and our thoughts for the sake of our prayers
  - d) We see throughout Scripture that God does not hear the prayer of someone who regards sin in their lives - Peter himself has mentioned this several times already
  - e) So, we must guard ourselves against sin, both in action and in thought, if our prayers are going to be effective against sin
  - f) This doesn't mean that we are contradicting the reliance on God that prayer symbolizes and are now pursuing sanctification on our own power
  - g) Self-control and sober-mindedness are the actions of faith in the power of prayer - when we pray for sanctification we believe that God will answer us and so we act as though we are free from the power of sin
  - h) If we don't act as though we are free from the power of sin, if we don't have self-control and sober-mindedness, we show that we do not have faith in God and our prayers will be useless
4. So, we must give ourselves to prayer and we must guard our thoughts and our actions having faith in the God who answers prayer

**C. We need to exercise corporate discipline in fighting against sin (vs 8-11)**

1. There are three each others here in the middle of chapter 4
  - a) As we've seen several other times in the I Peter, Peter believes that the Christian life must be lived out among the people of God
  - b) It is the people of God who strengthen us in our fight against sin
  - c) So, the way we act toward one another in the church is vitally important because how we act toward each other is how the gospel is worked out in our lives
  - d) Therefore, Peter tells us how we ought to act toward each other in the church in order to fight against sin
  - e) I'm going to look at these three things only briefly, because our time is growing short, but I want to consider the three corporate disciplines Peter enjoins

2. We need to love one another in order to defeat sin in our midst (vs 8)
  - a) Love is something Peter returns to over and over again in the book of I Peter - loving one another is of supreme importance to Peter
  - b) Here, the purpose of loving one another is to cover a multitude of sins - I want to consider two ways in which loving one another covers sins that teach us what it means to love one another
    - i. First, love covers the offensiveness of sin in our midst
      - i) As a group of people who are tainted by sin, we will assuredly sin against each other
      - ii) Our sins against each other will have the effect of driving us apart, preventing us from being unified as the body of Christ
      - iii) But the first thing love does is refuses to take offense
        - One. Proverbs 10:12 - *Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all transgressions.*
        - Two. I Corinthians 13:5 - *[Love] is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.*
      - iv) We choose to endure wrong without retaliating because we love each other and do not desire for sin to defeat us
    - ii. Second, love defeats the power of sin in our midst
      - i) Just because love choose to endure sin without offense does not mean that love ignores sin
      - ii) Our sins against each other not only tend to drive us apart but they put us at enmity with God
      - iii) Therefore, the second thing love does is work to defeat sin in our midst
        - One. James 5:19-20 - *My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.*
      - iv) Love covers sins by bringing the sinner back from his wandering
      - v) We choose to endure wrong, but we also choose to fight against sin for the good of our brothers and sisters in Christ
      - vi) I could go on at length about what this means, but briefly, it means that we should be ready to lovingly admonish and encourage one another in our fight against sin, it means that church discipline is the most loving thing we can do, it means that others' sins should be our problem, not because we want to intrude or in a gossiping sense, but because we want to see each other be holy
  - c) So love is those attitudes and actions that refuse to take offense at sin but also refuse to surrender to the power of sin in others' lives - when we act in these ways we are loving each other
  
3. We need to show hospitality to one another to encourage each other in our fight against sin (vs 9)
  - a) Hospitality is a service to the gospel
    - i. The importance of hospitality, serving others through your home, is emphasized in the fact that it is required of elders and widows who are supported by the church
    - ii. I Timothy 3:2 - *Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable...*
    - iii. Titus 1:7-8 - *For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable...*
    - iv. I Timothy 5:9-10 - *Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband, and having a reputation for good works: if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality...*
    - v. When we serve each other in our homes we encourage each other in the fight against sin and we provide a service to the gospel
  - b) Hospitality is necessary within the church
    - i. We must show hospitality both to strangers - those outside our church, and to those inside our church
      - i) Hebrews 13:2 - *Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.*
    - ii. But here, Peter is focusing specifically on showing hospitality within the church
      - i) It is in the section of things we do to build each other up
      - ii) And, the verse specifically says to show hospitality to one another
    - iii. We need to devote ourselves to showing hospitality to each other - serving each other through our homes

- c) Those who foster hospitality are servants of the gospel
  - i. Men, as the leaders of your home, you are ultimately responsible for leading your house in showing hospitality to those in the church, you are responsible for fostering an attitude that rejoices in being able to show hospitality
  - ii. But, women, I think we can agree that here is a special way that you can serve the gospel. Women, you have special gifts and responsibilities that you can use to foster an environment in your home that makes it easy and joyous to show hospitality. Your attitude about your home and how it is used and your work at your home can be used by God to build up the people of God.
  - iii. So, women, as you work in your homes, I would encourage you, work hard to make your home a place where guests are welcomed and a place where other believers are intentionally served. And then I would encourage you, when you do these things, when you work hard in your homes you are serving the gospel. The gospel is furthered by your work in your homes.
- d) Those who accept hospitality are servants of the gospel
  - i. When we talk about hospitality, sometimes we can emphasize the necessity of showing hospitality and overlook the fact that for hospitality to be shown in the body of Christ someone must also accept hospitality.
  - ii. When we graciously accept hospitality from our brothers and sisters, we are also serving the gospel
    - i) We are building relationships that will encourage us in the gospel
    - ii) We are demonstrating our unity in the gospel
    - iii) Especially when we accept hospitality from those who are different than us we demonstrate the power of the gospel to break down every barrier in Christ
- e) So, we should devote ourselves to fostering hospitality within the church. We should be eager to show hospitality to our brothers and sisters in Christ. We should be gracious to accept hospitality that is offered to us by our brothers and sisters in Christ as a gift from God. When we foster this attitude in our midst we will be defeating sin.

- 4. We need to use the gifts of God to build up the body of Christ to fight against sin (vs 10-11a)
  - a) Each of us has received a gift that should be used to build up the body of Christ
    - i. In verse 10, it says very specifically that each of us has received a gift, therefore we have been entrusted with a stewardship
      - i) We are entrusted with the stewardship of our talents
      - ii) We are entrusted with the stewardship of our authorities
      - iii) We are entrusted with the stewardship of our spiritual gifts
    - ii. Since each of us is entrusted with a stewardship, we must use our gifts wisely in order to serve one another
      - i) We ought to consider how we can use our positions, our talents and our gifts to build each other up in Christ - to prepare each other for suffering, to encourage each other in suffering, and to fight against sin in each other's lives
      - ii) This is why God has blessed us with our positions, our talents and our gifts
      - iii) Ephesians 4:7-13 - *But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,*
      - iv) Therefore we must use our positions, talents and gifts as stewards, considering how Christ would desire us to use them for the building up of Christ

- b) The importance of the ministry of preaching is shown
  - i. Peter gives two examples of how to live out this command, and the first regards speaking to the church - the ministry of preaching
  - ii. The striking thing about this example is the intensity that Peter gives to it - those who speak should speak as though they were speaking the very oracles of God
    - i) There is an old saying that says the preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God
    - ii) I'm not sure I would go that far, or at least I would interpret that statement on the weaker end - a preacher is not inspired like Scripture is
    - iii) But the preacher is speaking the Word of God
  - iii. This should teach us two things
    - i) First, preachers ought to give great care to their ministry of preaching
      - 1. If preachers ought to speak as though they were speaking the very oracles of God, this is a very important ministry
      - 2. So, preachers should be very careful to be extremely Biblical and Christ-honoring in their ministry - untruth should be guarded against rigorously
      - 3. Also, preachers should guard against complacency or apathy in their ministry - they should speak the Word of God as though they were the very Words of God
    - ii) Second, the church ought to pay close attention to the preaching of God's Word
      - 1. If preachers are speaking the oracles of God, it would behoove the listener to pay careful attention to the preaching
      - 2. Sunday mornings where we attend to the ministry of the Word of God are not light-hearted times - we ought to come prepared to listen well and apply carefully the Word of God that the preacher speaks to us
- c) Preaching is not the only ministry though
  - i. Peter gives two examples here, and I think his point is to show that preaching is important, but it is not the only thing
  - ii. We already considered this briefly up in hospitality - hospitality is also serving the gospel
  - iii. Here Peter says that the one who serves is similar to the one who preaches - they have different roles but they are both serving the gospel and they must both be using their gifts to build up the body of Christ
  - iv. So, if you are not called or gifted to be an elder and have a preaching ministry, you are no less necessary to the body of Christ and you are not exempt from this command - use whatever gifts, talents and positions you have been given to build up the body of Christ
- d) However we serve we must rely on God to do it and we must do it in order to serve the body of Christ
  - i. This is Peter's second main point here - first we should use our gifts as good stewards, second we should use our gifts by God's power
  - ii. The one who speaks must rely on God's speaking to build up the church
  - iii. The one who serves must rely on God's power to build up the church
  - iv. We can only do these things in total reliance upon God and when we rely on God in this way we give God glory because it is really He who is building up the church

## Conclusion

- A. I want to close by reviewing the applications I have made throughout our passage this morning and giving a word of exhortation, as it were:
1. We must devote ourselves to thinking the thoughts of Christ - how did Christ think about suffering? Was it something to be avoided? Was it something unpleasant that had to be endured? Or was it the will of God that brought God glory, defeated sin, and brought Him ultimate joy? Put on the thoughts of Christ!
  2. We must devote ourselves to resisting the world - Christ suffered in order to destroy the power of the world therefore we must not participate in the things of the world. This will necessarily mean the world will persecute us, but we ought to rejoice in this persecution because this is the same persecution Christ endured.
  3. We must devote ourselves to personal discipline - We must be devoted to prayer and we must guard our thoughts and our actions at all times as actions of faith in the God who has promised to free us from the power of sin.
  4. We must devote ourselves to corporate discipline - Our brothers and sisters in Christ strengthen us in these things. So, we ought to look toward building each other up in the faith by loving one another and working to defeat sin in each other's lives, by showing hospitality to each other in order to encourage and empower each other in our fight against sin, by serving each other in the body of Christ to build up the body.
- B. Why do we do this? Because this is why the gospel was preached to you. The gospel was preached that you might have life in Christ. Life that enables you to live and to suffer like Christ did. Life that defeats the power of sin in your life. Life that persists despite any suffering you might endure. Life that will endure past the grave and that now gives you the hope of resurrection. We devote ourselves to these things because of this gospel. If we reject this gospel, if we reject the purposes of this gospel, what hope do we have?
- C. Again, why do we do this? Because we serve the Almighty, Living God - To Him belong glory and dominion both now and forever more. Amen.