

Raised from Death unto Life

1 Peter 4: 1-6

Peter set the tone for the message he sought to convey as he introduced himself to the reader. He addressed them as strangers scattered throughout the Roman provinces. This served two basic principles – 1) Peter revealed to the believers that he was aware of their struggles. 2) It also served to remind them of their situation, being persecuted for their faith in Christ. This was not done to discourage them, but to remind them of their current reality. Peter did not intend to offer a troubling reminder without providing hope and help for their situation.

Throughout the letter, Peter has spoken candidly about the struggles they face and the Christian character they are to possess and portray in the midst of adversity. He continues that theme in our text today. While they faced much opposition, there was no need for despair. The world may have forsaken them, they may have lost much for the cause of Christ, but hope was not lost. Not only would the Lord abide faithful unto them in their current situation, their hope would extend beyond this life.

Our struggles are much different, and yet we all deal with seasons of adversity and discouragement. In the midst of our trials, we too need reminded of the faithfulness of our Lord and the blessed hope we have in Him beyond this life. As we discuss the [realities](#) of the text, I want to consider: [Raised from Death unto Life](#).

I. The Believer's Determination (1-2) – Peter knew if the church was to prosper, the believers would need a proper perspective, which would create a determined resolve to continue in the faith. Notice he spoke of:

A. Our Example (1a) – [Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind](#). As he sought to challenge and encourage the church, Peter knew there was no greater example of faithfulness in the midst of trials and suffering than the Lord. He reminded the church of the suffering Christ endured on their behalf. His suffering was endured for believers. He willingly endured the mockery and rejection of men, the abuses of the cross, the weight of sin, and the judgment of God in order to secure our salvation. All of this was endured by an innocent Man, one who knew no sin, had committed no crimes, and was falsely accused and sentenced to death. Christ is the great example believers are to follow.

- Peter then offered a specific challenge to the church – [arm yourselves likewise with the same mind](#). No doubt, this got their attention. Believers are to follow the example Christ set before us, being willing to endure suffering and adversity for the faith. As we will also discover, just as Christ

bore the cross to provide our redemption, we too are to take up our cross, and crucify the flesh in order to faithfully follow Christ. We must resist the temptation of the flesh, being clothed in the armor of God if we are to endure and enjoy spiritual victory.

B. The Expectation (1b) – *for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin*. Those to whom Peter wrote were familiar with suffering. They endured much ridicule, mockery, and rejection for their faith in Christ. Many of them also endured physical and emotional abuse for their faith. Those who faced such suffering needed to be reminded of the purpose for their suffering. They were not accepted of men because they no longer embraced the lusts of the flesh and lived like the world. They were different, living separated lives that bore witness to their faith. Their denial of sinful lusts brought oppression from the world.

- While this is difficult to accomplish living in a body of flesh, it is expected of all believers. When confronted with temptation to sin, we have two choices – we can willfully engage in sin, or we can arm ourselves with the mind of Christ in order to refrain from sin. Those who choose to refrain from sin and the lusts of the flesh will suffer because of their denial of that which the world seeks to promote. However, if we are to please the Lord, we must seek to cease from sin.

C. The Evidence (2) – *That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God*. Peter declared that faithfulness unto the Lord, ceasing from sin, (not living according to the lusts of the flesh,) but according to the will of God, will be evident within the believer's life for all to see. These have weighed their options and made a critical choice – choosing to crucify the flesh and its lusts in order to live according to the will of God. Within a society known for sin and indulgence, these would certainly be noticed due to the different lifestyle they have chosen, one that honors God instead of indulging the flesh.

- Such a principle seems easy enough to embrace, but it requires faith and commitment to secure. We daily battle the flesh and the lure of this world. Each day we must choose whom we will serve – the lusts of the flesh or the Lord who redeemed us. In order to please the Lord, we must live according to His will. Those who make this decision will be noticed by a world that has no desire for the Lord, seeking only to satisfy the flesh at all costs.

II. The Believer's Separation (3-5) – Next, Peter discussed the believer's separation from those within the world, who live according to the flesh, both in this life and in the one to come. Consider:

A. Our Past Rebellion (3) – *For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.* While I would never advocate trying to live in the past, it is good for us to be mindful of what the Lord delivered us from. Peter reminded believers that they too were once like the world, living to satisfy the flesh rather than seeking the will of God. He included himself in such prior rebellion. We walked according to lasciviousness – *filthiness, indecency, shamelessness, license, without restraint.* We walked in lusts – *a strong desire or craving and passion.* We walked in excess of wine – *drunkenness.* We walked in revellings – *carousing; uncontrolled license, indulgence, and pleasure.* We walked in banquetings – *drinking parties; partying and getting drunk.* We walked in abominable idolatries – *the worship of idols, whether mental or made by man's hands.* ⁱ While we may not have engaged in each of these past sins, the principle remains – apart from Christ we sought to indulge the flesh rather than live pleasing unto the Lord.

B. Our Present Reproach (4) – *Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.* Peter reminded the believers of the reproach they now suffer because they no longer engage in the sins of their past. Those with whom they used to party, now speak evil of them because they have chosen to resist temptation and refrain from sin. Old friends were unable to understand and embrace the change these had made in their lives.

- Many continue to deal with such reproach today. Those who once indulged the flesh are often shunned by those they once knew. The world doesn't understand why believers deny the flesh in order to please the Lord. Rather than respecting our decision, we are often ridiculed for our refusal to engage in sinful pleasures.

C. The Future Reality (5) – *Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.* Peter also revealed a sobering reality for all men. We all will stand before the Lord and give account of the lives we have lived. Both the quick and the dead will stand before the Lord in judgment. This refers to both the saved and the unsaved, those who have received salvation, choosing to live their lives to honor Christ, and those who have denied the Gospel, choosing rather to indulge the flesh and reject salvation. Believers may have been judged by those who ridiculed their restraint from indulgence, but all will stand before the Great Judge one day.

III. The Believer's Transformation (6) – Here Peter referred to the need for the Gospel and the great transformation it provides for those who receive. Consider:

A. The Conviction of the Gospel (6a) – For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

We discover a great benefit of the Gospel – conviction of sin. Being born in the physical likeness of our father Adam, we are all born with a sin nature. Because of our sin, we are separated from God, condemned in our sin, and literally dead spiritually. When the Gospel is preached to those who are dead in their sin, it quickens our awareness of the depravity of sin and our need for a Savior. The purpose of the Gospel is the salvation of those dead in sin, apart from a right relationship with God. It stands to reason the Gospel is to be preached to those who have yet to be born again in Christ, being delivered from their sin, and resurrected to newness of life in Him.

- While the flesh doesn't like to be corrected and convicted, I am thankful for the conviction of the Gospel. I rejoice for the day I heard the truth of the Gospel, realizing my need, being dead in trespasses and sin, repenting of my sin, and believing by faith the Gospel of Christ, unto salvation.

B. The Provision through the Gospel (6b) – For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

Peter also spoke of the great provision available through the Gospel. As we have already discussed, believers are often ridiculed and persecuted for their faith, suffering the judgment of men while living in the flesh. Some even gave their lives for the faith, becoming martyrs for Christ. While these may have suffered in the flesh, even being put to death physically, they live through the Spirit. Death had come, but even death could not hinder or remove the eternal life they received through faith in Christ. By responding to the conviction of the Gospel, these had received the great provision of the Gospel – salvation by grace through faith, restoration to God, and eternal life in Christ. 2 Cor.4:16-18 – For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day. ^[17] For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory; ^[18] While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.

Conclusion: While our current struggles do not compare to that of the early believers, we too are forced to deal with adversity and rejection. We may deal with difficulty and strife in this life, but we are promised eternal life that will exceed any of the struggles we endure here. There is eternal hope and assurance in Christ. We have been raised from death unto life through salvation in the Lord. If there are needs, bring those to Christ today. He is able and willing to provide for any need you may face.

ⁱ Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible - Commentary - 1 & 2 Peter; 1, 2 & 3 John; Jude.