

## Faithful till the End

1 Peter 4: 7-11

Today is a day unlike any we've ever known. In the past few years, the world has seen drastic change. We are living in a day of difficulty and decision. The day when God was given His rightful place in the affairs of our nation has been replaced with lust, greed, self-confidence, arrogance, and pride. Our society no longer sees the need for God in our midst. He has been removed from our schools, the halls of justice, and many of the legislative assemblies in our land.

Sadly, God is no longer desired or welcome in the average home in America. We have forgotten the divine providence of Almighty God that brought us to where we are today. America would never have survived without the Lord. I struggle to understand how a people so blessed can be so ungrateful as to even question if God exists! We must be living in the end times.

Not unlike our day, Peter and those who served the Lord in that day realized the rebellion and indifference of men, believing they were living in the end times. We too must be aware of our current situation and determine to abide faithful, even in the midst of adversity. Let's consider the [responsibilities](#) revealed in the text as we think on: [Faithful till the End](#).

**I. A Vision of Anticipation** (7a) – [But the end of all things is at hand](#). Yes, these are troubling times, but they are also exciting times. These are days of anticipation unlike any other generation has known. [The end of all things is at hand!](#) I believe the end is much nearer than we think. There are two aspects of our anticipation that we must consider.

**A. The Return of our Lord** – As perilous as the day in which we live has become, we must remember there is hope for the believer. Jesus has been gone for nearly 2,000 years, but He is coming again! I am as sure of His return, as anything I know. I have no doubt that Jesus will come to claim His bride. I believe, with all that is in me, that we are living in the 11<sup>th</sup> hour of time. I have no problem with the idea that some of us in this very room could witness His return.

- The stage is being set for His return. Time won't allow an in depth study of prophecy concerning Jesus' return, but the signs are clearly pointing toward it. Israel is a sovereign nation again. With the exception of the US and a small handful of alliances, she stands alone. The Islamic movement is seeking the total destruction of the Israeli nation. It is the fastest growing religion in the world and views Christians as infidels. You don't have to be a Bible scholar to see this world lining up in opposition to God.

- Also the Bible teaches that there will be [a great falling away](#) before the Lord returns. This is very evident in our day. The Christian faith is in steady decline. Churches that were once filled to capacity have closed their doors. Even here, in the Bible belt, we are surrounded by greater numbers each year who are un-churched, with no desire for salvation.
- The church has lost its power and influence. The wicked among us no longer view the “conservative Christian” as a threat to their sinful indulgence. We live as if there’s no use to take a stand. May I remind you that we are still a majority! [If God be for us, who can be against us?](#) Phil.4:13 – [I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me](#). Oh that God would open our eyes to see that He is coming soon! We need to live as if we truly believed that. The saved ought to wake each morning thinking, this could be the day. [Heb.10:37 – For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry](#). We need to anticipate His return.

**B. The Reality of our Lives** – [But the end of all things is at hand](#). As much as I believe in the Lord’s return, I’m also mindful of my obligation to do all I can with the little time I’ve been given. Life at its best, blessed with many years, is brief. We only get one opportunity to live for Jesus. Take a moment and consider the life you’ve lived. Ask yourself – have I given Jesus my best? Have I accomplished all I could have or should have for Him?

- I’m sure we all would have to answer, No! We may have been faithful to attend church, but much of our lives are lived for self. There are times when we are challenged and motivated, but we quickly lose that enthusiasm. Our lives may be filled with good intentions, but that alone doesn’t accomplish much. A missionary said, “If I had a thousand lives to live, I’d live them all for Jesus.” What about the life we’ve been given? We are left here for a purpose; God has a plan for each of us. We cannot put off or neglect what we need to do today. [Jam.4:14 – Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away](#). I have already lived at least half of my life; some of my best years are gone. I want to serve the Lord as if tomorrow would never come.

**II. An Attention to Participation** (7b-10) – As we anticipate the end times, we must not sit idly by just waiting on Jesus’ return. Yes, we are eternally secure, but that is no license for laziness. Our text reveals five character traits those anticipating the Lord’s return should possess.

**A. Submission** (7b) – [be ye therefore sober](#). We are told to be [sober](#). This involves much more than refraining from alcohol. It means “*to have a sound mind, being serious, in control of our lives and actions*.” It is fully understanding that Jesus will return and being constantly ready for His return. A sober mind can focus on the eternal, as well as our present needs and those of others.

Living soberly is living in light of the Gospel with a proper perspective of how we are to live and the glory that awaits. Soberness sees the “big picture.”

**B. Supplication** (7b) – We must [watch unto prayer](#). This is the same command the disciples heard in the garden of Gethsemane. This is genuine prayer that is aware of the needs around us at all times. Prayer is the greatest resource we have, but it often goes unused. We need to be in a constant attitude of prayer.

- Imagine what we could see right here if those present today would watch unto prayer. I’m not talking about a generic prayer at bedtime, but earnest, heart-felt, God-seeking prayer. Consider the homes and lives that would be forever changed if God’s people would only pray. I firmly believe that prayer makes a difference; it will avail much!

**C. Affection** (8) – [And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins](#). In these last days, we need fervent charity for each other. This isn’t referring to shallow love, but the type of love that God has for us. [Fervent](#) has the idea of “*an athlete stretching, reaching out, and giving all that he has to achieve his goal*.” Fervent love is passionate, (not sensual), for those around us.

- The church needs to rekindle her love for the brethren. With love consuming our hearts, there is no room for jealousy, anger, bitterness, or division. [Fervent love will cover a multitude of sins](#). If we could love as God loves, we wouldn’t see the imperfections of others. If we are to reach the lost, we must love each other. Genuine love will show forth so that the failures and imperfections go unnoticed.

**D. Communion** (9) – [Use hospitality one to another without grudging](#). In Peter’s day, believers opened their homes to each other. They found refuge, safety, and a bond of fellowship. We need that fellowship today. This world doesn’t understand us. They have nothing to offer that I desire.

- In these last days we ought to surround ourselves with God’s people. I find strength and encouragement with you. Church fellowship strengthens individual bonds. We learn to feel as others do. We must stand together in support of each other!

**E. Cooperation** (10) – [As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God](#). God has given each of us individual gifts. We are to

be good stewards of these gifts. It takes each of us working together to fulfill God's plan for this body of believers. Never let Satan or anyone else tell you that you are not needed in the church.

- Every gift is important and they complement each other. I can't exercise a gift that I don't possess. We are each responsible for the gifts we've been given. If we fail to use our gifts, there may be a void in our service. The church must come together in these last days.

**III. A Conviction for Sanctification** (11) – I would hope that we are closer to the Lord than when we were first saved. A sanctified life is one that has been delivered from the power of sin; we learn to rise above it. Our day needs those who live a sanctified life for Jesus! This involves two areas.

**A. Our Work** (11a) – *If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth.* We ought to glorify Christ in our words, as well as our deeds. Our speech ought to be in such a way that others see Jesus.

- But, actions speak louder than words. Our lives must show that Jesus lives within our hearts. This can only be accomplished through God's power working in us – His ability, not ours. What does our life reveal?

**B. Our Witness** (11b) – *that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.* Basically, our lives ought to glorify God. Everything we do should show forth a loving Savior who is in complete control of our lives. Wherever we go and whatever we do should be a witness to the change that has taken place in our hearts. The lost world needs to see a genuine witness for Christ. Time is running out; if we don't live a life to reach them, who will?

**Conclusion:** I trust you have come to a greater realization of the urgency for today. Our Lord's return could happen at any moment. Are we doing all we can in these last days to serve the Lord, reaching the lost and benefiting the church?

The Lord will come again as He said, and only those who have placed their faith in the Lord, receiving the glorious gift of salvation will be taken with Him. Those who have denied Christ will be left to face the horrors of the Tribulation. Are you prepared to meet the Lord should He come today? Do you know for sure that you are saved and will be in that number that is taken up with the Lord when He returns?