

1 Peter 4:1-11 – Living for God in the last days

A. Introduction – The New Testament is a book of unfinished business

- 1:7 – History is moving to a climax when Christ returns – and it is close.
- 1 Peter 1:3-5 – Hope is important for Christians facing suffering
- The Return of Christ is a dominant theme in the Bible - **1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; Philippians 3:20; James 5:9; Revelation 22:7,12,20**
- How should we live in the light of this?

B. 4:1-6 – Say no to sin

- Peter reminds us that there is a war on (2:11) – a conflict in our hearts between what we want and what God wants (Galatians 5:17).
- As we live with this tension – we need to remember three things.

❖ Remember the cross of Jesus (1-2)

- He suffered in space and time – a real event. As he hung on the cross, he was waging war against sin and 3:18 tells us that he was victorious.
- We are to arm ourselves with this same attitude and declare war on sin.
- We are “done with sin” – we must not flirt with it (1).
- We must make the daily radical choice to live for the will of God at any cost – even as Jesus did (2; Mark 14:32-36)

❖ Remember the call of Jesus (3-4)

- Jesus called us away from the old life of sin, which was controlled by human passions, so that we live for him (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10).
- When it comes to sin - enough is enough. Why would anyone want to return to this? It is like a dog returning to its vomit (2 Peter 2:22).
- But people may hate us because we are different (4).

❖ Remember the coming of Jesus (5-6)

- Jesus is the Judge and he is ready to return (5).
- When he comes, he will judge those who are persecuting his people (5).
- We can turn the other cheek, leaving God to judge (Romans 12:17-21).
- Believers may die – but they have a sure and certain hope (6).

C. 4:7-11 - Say yes to God

We are all channels of blessing into the lives of others (10). How?

❖ Keep praying (7)

- We need to be self-controlled and sober, so that we can pray effectively (1:13; 5:8).
- In this way we support and help each other in the last days.

❖ Keep loving (8)

- Love is the decision to live in such a way that we do other people good.
- It is the badge of the true Christian disciple (John 13:34).
- This love is to be earnest and fervent – literally at a stretch.
- Be willing to forgive (Proverbs 10:12; Matthew 18:21-22)

❖ Keep welcoming (9)

- The Christian home is an outpost of the kingdom of God.
- We should welcome the outsider, because God welcomed us (Hebrews 13:2; Romans 13:2; 3 John 5-8).

❖ Keep serving (10-11)

- God has given a spiritual gift to every Christian.
- These gifts are given by Christ and are valuable.
- If we speak, we are to speak God’s words and if we serve, we are to do so in God’s strength. In both we live for others and for the glory of God.
- As we wait for Christ’s return, we must be busy about his business.