

Living Obediently

1 Peter 4:1-11

Welcome to our second last week through the book of 1 Peter. I encourage you to keep reading through the letter as a whole to get a sense of the total message Peter is writing to these early believers. As you do, keep noting all the ways God is challenging and inspiring you to live differently and find some close friends to help spur you on to live these out.

How did you feel God speak to you through the message on Sunday?

Arm yourselves with Christ's attitude (v1-2)

1 Peter 4:1-6 is one of those great New Testament passages which talk of the radical shift/change that happens in a person's life when they come to faith. Was this your experience after putting your trust in Jesus for the first time?

What does it mean that Christ 'suffered in his body'? (*Hint: see 3:18*) How does this give us the motivation to commit ourselves to godly living?

What is the 'same attitude' that Peter encouraged his readers to 'arm themselves' with?

1 Peter 4:1-2 has a very similar logic and application to Romans 6:1-14. What parallels do you see between these two passages? How does Romans 6 help you understand what Peter means when he writes that 'whoever suffers in the body is done with sin'?

In your own words, how would you define 'sin'? Sin is something that Christians are to be 'done with' (1 Peter 4) and no longer slaves to (Romans 6), so how do you reconcile this theological truth with the presence of sin in your life?

What are some of the human desires that you have switched for doing the will of God since becoming a Christian? What human desires that are contrary to the will of God do you still struggle with?

Abstain from former foolish ways (v3-6)

For many of us (particularly those who came to faith later in life) can all too clearly remember when we used to follow our own selfish and sinful impulses without restraint. Peter uses this past lifestyle of his readers in verse 3 as additional motivation for living a godly life.

- As a saved Christian who has renounced such former living, how do you now think of those previous times in your life?
- Do those memories spur you on to godly living, or do you still feel a strong pull towards some of your previous sinful behaviour?

Have you ever experienced surprise or even abuse from non-Christians about some of your new lifestyle choices or morality as a Christian? Why do you think that is?

How is the reality of judgment (v5) and the saving power of the Gospel (v6) a helpful focus when it comes to daily choosing to live our earthly lives for the will of God?

The urgency of the Days (v7-11)

The return of Jesus is a recurrent theme in 1 Peter (1:5, 1:6, 4:13, 4:17, 5:1, 5:10). It has also been the subject of many sermons over the past 2000 years. Have those people been wrong? In what ways are we truly living in the 'last days'?

Do you personally have any sense of the imminence of Christ's return, or a sense that you could be called home to be with the Lord at any moment? If so, how does it change the way you view life? If not, how do you think it would change the way you live?

On the basis that the end of all things is near, Peter calls his readers to be alert and of sober mind so that they might pray. Why would he focus on these specific responses?

Alertness and sober mindedness are almost opposites of the pagan's reckless, wild living (v3). How important is this attitude of vigilance, self-control, and stable thinking in the Christian life?

The Apostle Paul also showed himself to be serious, self-controlled, focus and committed to godly living (see 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, 2 Timothy 3:12-17).

- How do you feel that our modern Western expressions of discipleship measure up to these biblical instructions and examples?
- Have we become too lax in regard to sin and prayer? Have we become overly casual about the inevitable judgment of all humanity and the return of Christ?
- If so, how do we address these things within our church? Within our own lives?

In the remaining verses Peter mentions 4 things specifically that Christians should be about if they believe the Lord's return is imminent: love, hospitality, service and proclamation.

- How have you seen those things within the life of our church? Can you share a time when you have been on the receiving end of any of those?
- Love and showing hospitality are a blanket instruction to all believers – so how are you going in this area of your life? In what ways does love 'cover over a multitude of sins'?
- What does it mean for you (with your unique personality, life situation and giftings) to be a faithful steward of God's grace in its various forms?

The end result of this section is that 'in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ'.

- Is this your dominant desire for your life?
- How does living out verse 1-2 the best way to fulfil verse 11?
- Having done the study, are there things (behaviours, attitudes, priorities, relationships) that you are convicted need to change this week?