

February 2012

“Striving to be the Church God
Always Wanted”

1 Peter ch.4

Striving To Be...



The Church God Always Wanted

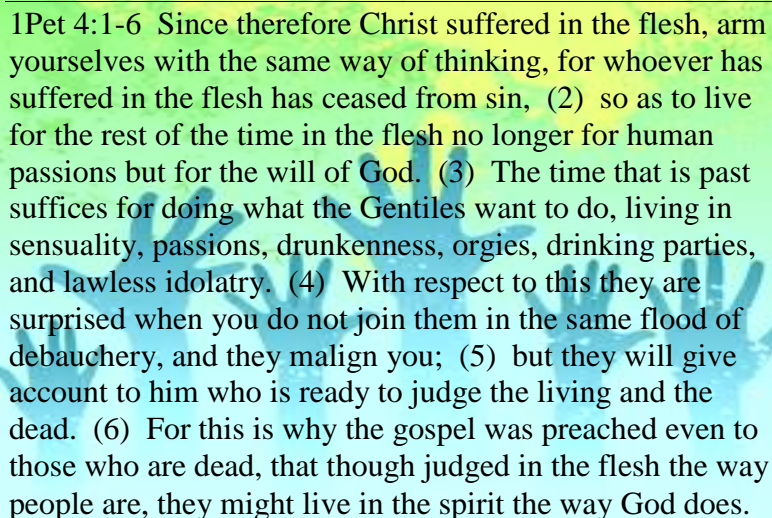
February 2012 Pulpit Series

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“Our New Life: Past, Present and Changed”

February 12, 2012

1 Peter 4:1-6



1Pet 4:1-6 Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, (2) so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. (3) The time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. (4) With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; (5) but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. (6) For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does.

Ch4: Suffering & Sanctification

Every Christian is on the same journey – The Journey of Sanctification.

When you trust Jesus Christ as Savior and receive forgiveness for your sins, the Bible refers to that as “justification”. Because of our salvation through faith in Christ we are justified or declared righteous by God.

Rom. 5:1 Therefore, since we have been *justified* by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Justification is an event, That God performs, when a person trusts His Son, Jesus Christ as personal Savior, finds forgiveness of their sins and is brought into God's family.

Sanctification is a life long process or a life long journey that every believer is traveling and it is a journey of change – of purification – of transformation us from what we are, into the kind of Christian God wants us to be.

And as the individual Christian goes, so goes the church. As God is Sanctifying us - making each of us into the kind of Christian He wants us to be, together we are becoming the kind of **Church God Always Wanted**.

Sanctification is God work in our lives, changing us from what we are, into who He wants us to be.

So, How will we know when we are on our way to becoming the Church God Always Wanted? Peter gives us 3 indicators.

Indicator #1: Our Past Life.

I We will be on our way to becoming the Church God Always Wanted, when we are on our way to putting our selfish practices and sinful life style behind us. (v1-2

** Sanctification involves a heart felt commitment, a willful dedication and purposeful resolution, toward becoming the kind of Christian God wants us to be.*

Becoming the Church God Always Wanted means considering....

A. The Value of a Willful Resolution (v1

* The mind is the human starting point of every act of obedience or disobedience.

(1) **Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh,** arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin

1) Christ is our example of a Resolution (1a

A resolution is a decision, a decree, a declaration, a pledge or an oath.

A resolution is a solemnly reverent, sober-minded decisions to accomplish an intended task. It is a statement of purpose and intent.

Without a resolution of some kind, no effective action will be taken.

The Purpose of a resolution is to solidify, communicate and document the steadfast desire of one's heart, to carry out and achieve a purpose or mission at all cost.. (v1a)

In chapter 2, Christ suffered righteously – having done nothing to deserve His suffering. We are then informed that His example of suffering for living righteously before God, should become our example for living.

1Pet 2:19-21 For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. (20) For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. (21) ***For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.***

Christ resolved to live righteously, though it meant suffering and we are to view Him as our example of suffering, and not giving up living the life God has called us to live – one that is true to Him.

((Christ is our example of a life of resolution))

2) Christ is our example of warfare (1b)

** One thing you can expect as a Christian, is to suffer for Christ, by being attacked by the enemy.*

(1) Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, **arm yourselves with the same way of thinking,** for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.

From Jesus' own words, the purpose of Satan, our enemy , is “to steal, kill and destroy...” (Jn. 10:10)

We are to “Arm ourselves..” – military term - meaning to take up your weapon -- Equip yourself for battle. Do what it takes to be properly equipped, in order to be effectively prepared for battle.

We are to fight against the devil and fight *for* our marriage.

We are to stand against the devil's attacks, as we stand *with* other Christians in the unity of the body of Christ.

We are to "...arm ourselves with the same way of thinking...". What way is that? The example of Christ and his purposeful resolution to resist the devil and live for Good.

Satan is the accuser of the Bretheren (Rev.12:10), He is our adversary the devil (1Pet.5:8). He is the one who wages war against our souls, with all his powers of hell (Eph.6:12).

ILL Leonard Ravenhill says, if you're not being attacked by our enemy the devil, then you must not be doing anything that would cause him to be concerned. (*paraphrased*)

If you are truly following Jesus Christ – If He is truly the center of your family and your faith – If you are genuinely and resolutely seeking to obey and serve Him with your life, then you will suffer persecution from the devil himself.

2Tim. 3:12 Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

3) Christ is our motivation to change our past life (1c

(1) Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, **for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.**

The point Peter is making here is not that if we have suffered, then that suffering somehow purges sin from our lives. But that the person who has suffered, after the example of Jesus Christ, has put his past behind him and is no longer satisfied with living the way he always lived, but exemplifies a life resolved to live for Christ, rather than for their own sinful pleasures and purposes.

Satan's attacks are intended to thwart our resolution to follow Christ.

((Following Christ is an example of warfare))

Becoming the Church God Always Wanted means considering....

B. What is the The Result of a Willful Resolution?(v2

(2) so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God.

1) There are some who must stop wasting the Life God has given them.

2) Each of us has a limited life – limited time – yet we have unlimited potential as we resolve to live for Christ and to be used by Him.

3) Peter tells us to “Live the will of God” (v2)

We must Seek it, Find it, Live it, pursue it, persevere in it, Resolve not only to live the will of God but resolve also to die in the will of God. Commit that we will live for Christ, following His example, through the thick and the thin, through the highs and the lows, so that we persevere in the will of God to the very end of our lives.

That is where our resolve can end, because that is when our sanctification process will end – at death and not before.

((We will be on our way to becoming the Church God Always Wanted, when we are on our way to putting our sinful humand passions and pleasure behind us and begin living out the righteous will of God in our lives.))

C. There There is The Reality of a Willful Resolution (v3

* *The Christian who is still living in their past life is living out of the will of God.*

(3) The time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry.

i.e. “the time of living like you always lived is over”.

The way I used to think is no longer acceptable.

The way I used to live is no longer appropriate.

The time of living for ourselves is over. The time of living in darkness is gone.

Christ has saved us and given us newness of life (Rom.6:4). HE has brought us out of darkness into His marvelous light (1Pet.2:9)

Therefore, It is high time that we begin living in a manner that is worthy of being named a true believer in Jesus Christ.

((We will be on our way to becoming the Church God Always Wanted, when we are on the way to putting our past, sinful, selfish practices behind us. This is part of the Sanctification process..))

Indicator #2: Our Present Life:

II We will be on our way to becoming the Church God Always Wanted, when we are on our way to living every day in light of His calling and His will for our lives.
(vs4-6)

A. As Believers In Jesus Christ, We have A New Life and A New Life (v4

** We will be on our way to becoming the church God always wanted when we begin living the Christian life.*

(4) With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you;

Through Christ, we have salvation, forgiveness, redemption, a new family and new destiny and new future – a new life. Because of the new spiritual life, we are called to live a new earthly life.

It's significant how many times Peter refers to this concept in his writings.

1) A New Life makes a difference.

A New life will be noticed by the old crowd. (v4a)

“they are surprised”., (v4a)

Guy was a fellow in our town who was the son of a very wealthy and powerful man in the community. When Guy trusted Christ as His Savior, he became a big disappointment to his family. But He also became a big example of new life in Christ.

2) A New Life makes others take note

A New spiritual life will be evidenced by a new earthly lifestyle.

Some people may know your past life and by noticing your present life, may be surprised – even to the point of asking you what has happened?

1Pe 3:15 but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you;

((A New Life Makes others take note))

3) As a result of that, A New Life may bring about antagonism.

The people who knew you before are now surprised and they also may malign or speak evil of you. You may be opposed by those who ones loved you for your sinfulness.

Darkness does not appreciate Light. Darkness and Light do not mix – one will irritate and ultimate eliminate the other. It is a Spiritual Battle.

Satan will not settle for your positive impact and your spiritual influence on others that he is still working on.

God may be using your life to be a witness to others and a threat to his intent of dragging other to hell with him.

((A New life may bring satanic opposition))

B. We are reminded of God's coming judgment on the wicked (v5)

"...those who malign you.."

(5) will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

1) This is God's Judgment on those who reject Christ's sacrifice.

Those who think they can label themselves a "Christian", but live like they always lived, sin like they've always sinned and God says His judgment is one the wicked.

2) This is God's judgment on those who reject The payment of our sins is eternal

Rom 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

((We will be on our way to becoming the Church God Always Wanted, when we are on our way to living every day in light of His calling and His will for our lives.))

Indicator #: Our Changed Life.

III We will be on our way to becoming the Church God Always Wanted, when our new way of living becomes more attractive to us than our old way of living used to be.

** We are new creatures in Christ.*

A. Peter points to The power of a true Christian witness (3:15)

(5) but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. (6) For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does

A changed life is an evidence of God's grace and is a testimony of the gospel message.

** The message of the gospel makes an earthly and eternal difference.*

2 Cor. 5:17 – *If any man be in Christ, He is a new creature, old things have passed away, behold all things have become new.*

1Pe 1:14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance,

1Pe 1:18 knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold,

Rev 12:10-11 And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. (11) And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the ***word of their testimony***, for they loved not their lives even unto death.

B. The proclamation of the Gospel (v6)

** It is the gospel that we must believe and be saved. It is the gospel that is rejected that brings judgment upon all who have sinned.*

(6) For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does

As Peter mentioned in ch.3, the gospel was preached not only in the NT but also in the OT, specifically in the days of Noah, who was a preacher of righteousness.

1Cor. 15:1-4 Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, (2) and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you--unless you believed in vain. (3) For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, (4) that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,

It is the gospel of Jesus Christ that each of us will be held to account for. Did you believe in Jesus? Did you find forgiveness of sins in this life? And if so, did it **change** your life as God intended?

((We will be on our way to becoming the Church God Always Wanted, when our new way of living becomes more attractive to us than our old way of living used to be.))

Application

What about Us? How have we been changed because of the new life we have in Christ? If not, why not?

If we have been changed, what does our testimony tell others about new life?

joy, peace, personal transformation or

anger, self-focused, bitter or complacent?

Ask God to help us as we live our new life in Christ as a testimony of His transforming, saving power.

Questions Worth Considering from 1 Peter 4

Executable Outlines, Mark Copeland

www.executableoutlines.com

4:1 What do you learn about Christ? What must you do if you are a Christian? You may suffer as a Christian. What will that show?

4:2 What will you do if you are a Christian? _____

4:3 What do you learn about the life of a *non-Christian? Someone might believe and become a Christian. What is different then? What do you think about that? _____

4:4 What has changed if you are a believer? What do your former friends do? What do you think about all that? _____

4:5 What will your former friends have to do? What do you learn about God? What might that cause you to do? _____

4:6 What do you learn about Christians who are now dead? What do you learn about how you should behave as a believer? What is the future for Christians? What do you think about all that?



“Grace and Glory The Purpose of Blessing”

February 19, 2012

1 Peter 4:7-11

1Pet 4:7-11 (7) The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. (8) Above all, keep loving^{1Cor.13} one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. (9) Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. (10) As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: (11) whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies--in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Ch4: Suffering & Sanctification

The Church Serving the Church

God's Grace on display & God's Gifts being distributed (v10)

The Church Meeting One Another's Needs (v8-9)

Sanctification = the process of God brining us along in our Christian maturity, transforming us from what we are now, into what He wants us to be. – God wants to change us. That continues until we step into eternity.

** The Church God Always Wanted is a church full of His grace on display in a way that brings God Optimum glory!*

Introduction

As Peter writes, he writes to persecuted believers, who are suffering for the cause of Christ. They might be realistically compared to believers in China, Chiapas, India, Indonesia or perhaps even the USA in the not to distant future.

These are people who are suffering, simply because they are “Believers in Jesus”, who are on the run, suffering, being persecuted, denied their normal basic rights as human beings... And it is to these people Peter writes and addresses an issue that is being neglected, but was absolutely at the core and cause of life, for the very first believers in Christ, immediately following the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Church is suffering and some are suffering more than others. As a result, some have less of the basic, human necessities, than others.

Most of 1Peter is addressed towards Christians suffering for living righteously in an unrighteous and ungodly culture. But in 1 Peter. 4:7, Peter shifts his emphasis and includes an urgent message for believers in their relationship, not with an unbelieving, pagan culture, but their relationship with one another as believers in Jesus Christ.

The core issue seems to be *communion*. Peter writes to encourage the believers that have more, to share with those who don't have as much as they have. Peter is urging Believers to share sacrificially for the physical needs of one another. They are not being asked to share out of their abundance. They are being asked to share, simply by virtue of the fact that they have more than others. They may not have an abundance, but they do have more than others and those who have more, are encouraged to sacrificially share with those who have less.

2 Cor. 8:4-7 – koinonia – fellowship – communion – (communism)

This is a reference to the deep, spiritual life we share as believers, that we share with no other people on the planet.

Gal 2:9 and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of *fellowship* to Barnabas and me...”

“Fellowship” is the word for fellowship or communion. When they shook hands, they were partaking in Christian **communion**.

** Now turn around and shake hands with someone next to you.*

Rom 15:26 For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some *contribution* (i.e. koinonia or fellowship) for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem.

“Contribution” is the word for fellowship or communion. As they were sharing their resources, to meet the needs of others, they were partaking in Christian **communion**. Tangible way of sharing the Spiritual intimacy they had in command as believers in Christ.

** Now turn around and give \$5 to the person next to you.*

In our Christian culture today, we perceive communion to be a little factory formed piece of bread, or perhaps some home made communion bread, and some juice in a cup. We think about Christ and His sacrifice for us, we thank God for what we have and what He has done and we go home – and that’s the end of communion.

But it was never meant to be that way. Church today, has all but lost the understanding and practice of true Christian communion.

That is the safe and sterile form of communion – i.e. bread and juice. But Biblical communion is so far beyond just that. “Christian communion” was originally intended to be far deeper and life affecting than bread and juice.

When they gave to meet the needs of others, that was sharing in Christian communion. When believers shook hands with or greeted one another with a holy kiss, that was a sign of sharing spiritual communion with another believer. Shaking hands was **NOT** like a slap on the back. It was more like a symbol of unspoken acceptance or a silent affirmation that they were of like faith and joint members of the family of God.

ILL: I remember meeting with the Underground Church in Uzbekistan. I was given the right hand of fellowship and a holy kiss – by another man. I remember being startled and wondering what had just happened to me.

A mission with me whispered to me that the handshake and holy kiss was a sign to them that we were “safe” and we had just been accepted into their illegally meeting congregation of believers.

Act 2:42-43 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and *fellowship*, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. (43) And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.

As church was sharing communion and doing what the church was supposed to do, God was at work doing what He was supposed to be doing.

** The Church God Always Wanted is a church full of the grace of God on display, in a way the brings Optimum glory to God!*

Regarding the church suffering and sharing, Peter address....

I The End of All Things (vs 7-8)

** The Holy Spirit leads Peter to write regarding Christian Thinking.*

2Pet 3:1 “This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder,” *Peter’s reason for writing*

A. The Church God Wants is One with a Church focused attention (v7)

We know that Peter seems to be anticipating his own death

2Pe 1:13-15 I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, (14) since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me.

(15) And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.

He writes to stir up their thinking (intended result, to affect their actions)

1) He urges the church to be Self Controlled (v7a)

Clearly, time is of the essence – not a time for flippancy, or complacency, but taking a realistic look at their circumstances and the Christian life.

(7) The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.

Sound mind or Clear minded (NIV) – not clouded thinking –not distracted, but able to understand situations and respond appropriately.

2) Sober-Minded (v7b)

Sober minded or watchful – spiritually alert and taking proper action.

3) Prayerful consideration (v7c)

Ultimately, the way we think will affect the way we pray. Be prayerful – talking to the Lord about their situations and about one another. (Intercession).

Peter is not a dooms day prophet, but he is calling the church to be clear minded, alert and observant concerning the circumstances they are experiencing and to be discerning in their responses.

1Ch 12:32 And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do...

He writes attempting to keep the church together in times of tremendous challenge and adversity. - to attempt to challenge the church to keep focused – Christ focused, to understand what is going on and as a result, how they are expected to live and even treat one another. It is of utmost importance. It is how the church will survive in times of persecution.

Sojourning and Suffering...for the joy that is before us
(*The Church God Wants is One with a Church focused attention -v7*))

B. The Church God Wants is one with a Church Focused affection (v8)

* *When the going gets touch, what does the church do?*

7) The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. (8) **Above all, keep loving^{1Cor.13} one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.**

1) As a Church we should evidence Family Priority (v8a)

love one another “deeply” or “fervently” = “stretched out” – i.e. from one point to another point, with no gaps – unceasing.

Love – 1 Cor. 13

Love – a family kind of love – should be priority within the church and among believers in Jesus.

2) As a church we should exhibit Family Effort (v8b)

Going out of your way to demonstrate that love.

- Like those who regularly visit family members in care facilities.
- Like those who regularly visit shut-in family members and help them at their home.
- Like those who have taken in family members into their homes, in order to give closer, better quality care of that family member.
- Like families who have adopted children into their homes, sacrificing and making them part of their own family. These are examples of family loving and taking care of family. These are also examples of how the church family is expected to love and care for church family.

3) A Family Awareness (v8b)

Sojourning and Suffering...for the joy that is before us

Awareness – reality check – the relationship may be challenging and perhaps difficult – especially for family members who require constant observation and specialized care, due to physical limitations or mental conditions – those willing to count the cost, because they are family.

We find ourselves putting up with a lot, because someone is family.

Love “**covers** a multitude of sins” = to hinder the knowledge of a thing

That is the way it is to be in the church.

ILL: We have been putting up sheetrock in our basement. Sheet rock covers a multitude of mistakes. – boards that are crooked, nails that missed their marks, wire strung somewhat haphazardly – its all covered by the drywall. Drywall covers a multitude of mistakes.

Prov. 19:11 Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense.

Family awareness is the reality that, though we are imperfect, we are still family and family love covers a multitude of sins.

((The Church God Always Wanted is a church full of the grace of God on display, in a way the brings Optimum glory to God!))*

Regarding that family love, Peter addresses...

II The Source of All Things (vs9-11a)

* *The Holy Spirit leads Peter to write regarding Christian Giving.*

A. Christian Giving is a Joyful Sacrifice (v9)

* *Its one thing to give. Its another thing to give joyfully.*

(8) Above all, keep loving^{1Cor.13} one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. **(9) Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.** (10) As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace

1) Christian love involves caring for strangers (v9a)

(8) Above all, keep loving^{1Cor.13} one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. **(9) Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.**

Care for the “body”, but not necessarily someone we consider a friend or even pleasant. Not like Mom of Dad – Grand Mother or Grand Pa – not like taking your child back into your home as they face financial problems.

Mat 25:35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,

This encourages helping and caring for other believers who have fallen on hard times.

2) Giving Christian love involves care without complaining (v9b)

Unfortunately, people were helping other Christians, during times of persecution – they evidently took some in and were “hospitable” but were complaining about it. Peter says, “where is the heart of Christ in what you are doing?”

v.9a) “**Grumbling** or complaining” = a secret displeasure not openly avowed

To do something God has called us to do – and to do it without complaining or obeying under duress – our hearts must have something miraculous and transformational take place before that is even possible.

ILL: Our youth group ACTION, is helping our Care & Outreach team with the church’s food pantry and I want to tell you, they do so joyfully. They are excited about putting the bagged meals together. And with the increase of the resources being available, there has been an increase of opportunities to help people who are in need of groceries. Amazing how God seems to have worked that out.

They are excited and joyful about helping others.

B. Christian Giving involves Joyful fellowship and Stewardship (v10)

** We tend to think of Christian stewardship in terms of money, but stewardship is anything God has give to us, that He intends for us to pass on to others or to use for the benefit of others.*

Some people view Christian stewardship as something akin to “socialism”.

(9) Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. (10) As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:

We should attempt to put ourselves in their shoes. Consider the circumstances of others.

1) Living together in Persecution

In times of persecution, there will always be some with less than others. Some will have more and others will have greater need. Peter writes to urge those Christians who have been blessed with more, to realize that their situation is a blessing from God – God has given them more of His divine provision, and they are to consider what they have, as belonging to God and intended to be used to help other believers in need.

God truly is the Source of All things!

2) Giving and suffering with others

To read Peter’s message and to think, “all this talk about persecution –is all irrelevant information – because it doesn’t apply to me.

I believe to think like that regarding the subject of Christian persecution demonstrates an attitude of ignorance and disregard for the promises of God about the coming global state of humanity, as well as the present cultural state of “Christian” America.

Our nation grows deeper in its determined rejection of God in our nation. It grows in its detest toward Christians and Biblical values.

If we are paying any attention to the news, we realize that little by little, our President and his administration systematically hammering one nail after the other into the coffin of a once Constitutionally governed America.

Our culture is progressing incrementally, toward limiting, squelching, erasing and eradicating a once, God centered America.

For Believers in Jesus Christ, I believe the handwriting is on the wall. We know from the promises of Gods' Word what is coming and what to expect. To sit and think that it won't happen to us because we are Americans is nothing less than ludicrous.

I believe it is crucial that we are informed and prepared for the certain, persecution that is promised by God Himself. We must be spiritually prepared. We must prepare our children, being certain they are firmly established in their faith and that dependence upon God is the first and foremost priority in our families' lives.

Will our families be prepared for persecution? Will we be prepared to help others?

III The Culmination of All Things (v11b)

** The Holy Spirit leads Peter to write regarding Sober minded Christian living.*

(9) Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. (10) As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: **(11) whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies--in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen**

A. When we speak, we Speak as with the voice of God (v.11a)

** Our words matter. We should seek to speak with the words given to us by God, to share with others which will establish and strengthen them in their faith.*

B. When we serve, we serve as with the strength of God (v.11b)

** Serve Christ, trusting Him for His strength for each task.*

When we give, help or show hospitality, we do so as though God Himself has given us what we have, so that we can be good stewards of His grace and blessings.

C. The Glory of God is the reason and purpose for everything (v.11c)

** All that we do, all that we say, the attitudes of our minds and the affections of our hearts, must begin to reflect the Church God Always Wanted, - it is for His glory that we are here. It is for His glory that we suffer persecution. It is for His glory we are to love, help, serve and encourage others.*

*((* The Church God Always Wanted is a church full of the grace of God on display, in a way that brings Optimum glory to God!))*

IV Behold the Power of Christian Fellowship - Summary (v9)

Act 2:44-47 (44) And all who believed were together and had all things in common. (45) And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. (46) And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, (47) praising God and having favor with all the people. **And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.**

Act 4:32-36 Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. (33) **And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.**

Do we get a realistic picture of what was going on? There was no need for evangelism training. There was no evangelistic outreach event planned. There was no program started to implement some church growth guru's latest strategy.

It was the Church doing what the church is supposed to be doing. The Church being the Church God Always Wanted. And as a result of the church being the church, was that God blessed in ways they could not have possibly imagined or anticipated, nor could they have planned and pulled off the same results with any modern, experts, church growth program. It was simply, the Church and It was GOD!

Do you long for that? Do you yearn for something to happen and suddenly experience a mighty outpouring of Gods' power and Spirit? Do you hunger and thirst for something so unexplainable, something so unexpected and yet something so unmistakably a Supernatural movement of God?

I believe we are on the way to becoming the Church God Always Wanted. I also believe we are on the way to experiencing God bless our kingdom efforts with demonstrations of His kingdom power and, displays of His glory.

To the degree that you and I are involved in the family life of the church, will be the degree that God uses you to be the Church God Always Wanted and will be to the degree that God inhabits the praise and fellowship of His people and moves in us and through us, to the fulfilling of His will and accomplishing His promises of reaching the lost for His own name sake.

(Turn Around and put back to the congregation)

Now, I want to put my back to you, so none of you will have to break eye contact with me.

How much do you participate in the “fellowship or communion” family life of the church apart from Sunday mornings? How many are involved in church fellowship outside the 10:30am Sunday Worship Service? How many are regularly involved in some form of group Bible study other than at 10:30am Sunday morning? What about our men’s gatherings, or our women’s gatherings? What about our Sunday morning SS or Discovery and Discipleship groups? What about our Mid-week prayer and Bible study group?

I have had people tell me, “I really need to be mentored, to be discipled, - I need help in my Christian faith formation, and yet those who have told me that **NEVER** participate in any opportunities for faith development or fellowship participation, other than 10:30 on Sunday mornings.

Then I have someone tell me, “That group just doesn’t minister to me”. or “That’s just not an interesting topic for me”. As a result they never really get involved in the faith formation or fellowship participation with the body of Christ.

Bottom Line...

“Church” is:

- what we give to God in worship
- what we contribute to one another in Christian fellowship
- How we reach out to the lost with the gospel of Christ.

Sometime, along our Christian process of Sanctification, we must get beyond the mindset that says, “Church is all about what I get out of it.” At some point, we must come to the Biblical understanding that church is all about what we *contribute* to it. Fellowship is all about our lives connecting with one another. Church is all about personal interaction, relational connections and sharing our spiritual lives together.

If you are homebound, then TV “church” may be an acceptable alternative. If not, TV not church, nor is it an acceptable alternative for church. For most, to the exclusion of shut-ins, TV Church is

only an excuse for choosing not to be part of the personal body of Christ that God has for you.

I believe it is what God wants to do. We must believe that is what God wants and promises. We must pray for that to take place. We must obey in the things He expects His church to be doing.

We must be trusting, and looking, with great anticipation for those things to be accomplished by His power, according to His promises.

Thank God with me, for what He is preparing to accomplish, through His Church, for the sake of His own honor and glory.

Where are you? How are you participating in and interacting with the Church as God intended it? How are you growing in your fellowship with your church? How are you contributing to the spiritual life of the group of people you refer to as “your church”?

Why are you remaining at arms length with the body of Christ and God’s will for your life?

We will be well on our way to becoming the Church God Always Wanted, when we are on our way to becoming individuals who share God’s graces and speak Gods’ words in loving Christian communion.

((The Church God Always Wanted is a church full of the grace of God on display, in a way the brings Optimum glory to God!))

Questions for Consideration

4:7 What do you learn about time? How should you behave so that you can pray? What do you think about that? _____

4:8 What is very important? What do you learn about love? What do you think about that? _____

4:9 What should you do? How should you do it? What do you think about that? _____

4:10 What do you learn about gifts? How should you use the gifts that God has given to you? What do you think about that? _____

4:11 What should you do when you speak? What should you do when you help other people? What should be the result of everything that you do? Why should you do these things? The verse finishes with a special statement of *glory to God. We call it a 'doxology'. Make a doxology of your own. _____



“For the Joy That Is Before Us”

1 Peter 4:12-19
2012

February 26,

INTRO

Communion

Children's Church

1Pet. 4:12-19 (12) Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. (13) But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice^{1:6,8} and be glad when his glory is revealed. (14) If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. (15) But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. (16) Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. (17) For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? (18) And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" (19) Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust^{2:23} their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

ILL: In the series Get Smart, you may recall Maxwell Smart, Secret Agent 86. Agent 86 would be given a new assignment by the Chief. The Chief would say something like --"your life will be in danger every minute of the day, you'll be under constant attack from the enemy, and if caught, you will be tortured, beaten and perhaps burned alive". To which 86 would respond, "*And Loving It!*"

There are believers around the world who do not love persecution, but they have grown to expect it and even rejoice in it.

1Pet. 1:6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various **trials**,

2Cor. 7:4 Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our **tribulation**.

Heb. 10:34 For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

Phil. 3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

* For true believers, there is a joy in suffering for Jesus Christ.

For the joy that is before us, there must be...

This week we read of Kylie Bisutti, a top model for Victoria Secret's as withdrawn from modeling with the lingerie company because as a Christian she has been convicted that she has been dishonoring her body, her husband and God.

One source stated that she is experiencing difficulty getting other modeling jobs, simply because of her testimony of faith in Christ.

Pastor Ioseph of Iran has not been sentenced to death by hanging. He may be dead before tomorrow, or he may remain on death row for the next 10 yrs, thinking every day, "Is this the day?"

These are just two examples of Christian persecution and they are only representative of suffering believers around the world.

To experience the joy that is before us, there must be...

I Prudent Preparation and Expectation of Hardships **(vs12-13)**

* Many believers in USA think Christians should not suffer or will not suffer. And any joy to be found in suffering, comes from escaping suffering rather than experiencing suffering.

A. Expect AND Prepare for trials (v12)

* *Trials are promised!* .

1Pet 4:12 (12) Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. (13) But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed

“fiery” = 1a) the burning by which metals superheated reduced to their purest form. - a is figure drawn from a refiners fire, representing calamities or trials that test the character (Thayer, Bible Dict.)

i.e. – (paraphrased) “Christian, don’t be surprised at the fiery furnace of hardships that is coming on you, which is purposed to test you, - don’t view the purifying circumstances of your life as being some strange thing that is happening to you, as though you don’t deserve it.”

Peter uses 2 terms of ignorance.

1) “Surprise” means ignorance because we don’t expect it to happen.

* *Christian suffering has a promise.*

Peter clearly informs us in vs.12 that we should not be surprised by suffering or persecution – we should not think it strange when we some trial comes upon us. If we *are* surprised, then it is a sign of our own ignorance of Scripture and of God.

Rev 6:9-11 When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the

Sojourning and Suffering...for the joy that is before us

witness they had borne. (10) They cried out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" (11) Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.

Rev 20:4 Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Rev 7:13-15 Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" (14) I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (15) "Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.

Scripture is clear that Christians should expect and prepare for trials.

2nd term of ignorance....

2) "Strange" indicates ignorance because we don't know why suffering happens.

** Christian suffering has a purpose.*

As Believers, we must be informed TODAY – we must be aware NOW – that as believers, we will suffer persecution.

For the Christian to find him/herself in the midst of trials and suffering, not knowing why this is all going on – that time of trial and ignorance is opportunity we have allowed our enemy to discourage us, dishearten us, to distract us and defeat us, as we are desperately attempting to figure out "Why is this happening to me?" "Why is God allowing this?"

ILL: --I can't forget the wife of a friend of mine who lay dieing from an illness that was little by little robbing her of her earthly, physical life. My friend Al, said to his wife, "Why should this happen to you? Why would God allow this to happen to you?" To which his wife replied, "Why not me?", as though it is some strange thing going on.

She knew Christians will suffer. She was not ignorant, nor did she attempt to deny it.

Christians who are not expecting to suffer and don't know why God allows suffering are likely candidates for anger, bitterness and resentment toward God and are more likely to suffer devastation of their faith, due to the attacks of Satan and their own ignorance of the purifying purposes of God.

Trials are tests

Rev 3:10 Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

Test = scrutinize, examine

Trials Evaluate our motives

1Cor. 3:13 each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.

Trials build perseverance

Heb 11:17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac:...

Jas 1:12 Blessed is the man that endures temptation/trial: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

Enduring suffering evidenced true faith in Christ

1Pe 1:6-7 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, (7) so that the tested genuineness of your faith--more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire--may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Consider these additional scriptures....

Rom 5:3 More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,

Rom 5:2-5 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. (3) More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, (4) and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, (5) and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

2 Tim 3:11-12 my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra--which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. (12) Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

((It is imperative that Christians, are informed about the promise of suffering and prepared for the personal experience of suffering.))*

B. Christians must come to grips with the truthful reality that sufferings are to be expected and we are to Rejoice in Suffering (v13

*

What can possibly happen when a tornado comes but nobody pays any attention to the tornado warning? What if no one ran to their basements or to designated place of safety? What could possibly happen? - *devastation!*

What could possibly be the result of an earthquake in the Asian Pacific regions, and upon hearing the Tsumami warnings, instead of fleeing to safety, everyone ran to the beach with their cameras awaiting the 30 foot wall of water? - *devastation!*

What would happen if no one read the warnings on rat poison, but thought it would be a fun trick to play on the kids at Halloween? - *devastation!*

Right now we're all thinking, those are silly illustrations and they are. How much more foolish is it, to read from Scripture of the warnings and promises of Christian suffering, and yet discard these

Sojourning and Suffering...for the joy that is before us

warnings and make absolutely no preparation for ourselves, our families and our churches? It is foolish, because the potential devastating results are just as real, yet even more devastating, because the results will be of eternal consequence.

1Pet 4:12 (12) Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. (13) But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

**** Suffering Christians are in good company with Christ Himself.***

There are Christians around the world who are persecuted, imprisoned, who have no rights and are suffering Christians with whom we may be numbered in the not too distant future.

1Pe 1:6 “Wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through various trials...”

* When we suffer *for* Christ, we stand *with* Christ.

Jas 1:2-4 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, (3) for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. (4) And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Rather than being devastated by sufferings.....

((Christians must make Prudent Preparation and have realistic Expectation regarding the trials and suffering that are promised to believers in God's Holy Word.))

In order to experience the joy that is before us, we must be...

II Suffering for Christ and considering it normal (v14-16)

* *As long as sufferings for Christ is considered abnormal, we will always be surprised and will always think it strange. We'll always be asking “Why?” and we will always be questioning God.*

v.12) Don't be surprised – don't think it strange,

1Pet 4:14-17 (14) If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. (15) But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. (16) Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. (17) For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God

* *compare Mat. 5:10-12*

A. Suffering, Blessing and the Glory of God

(v14)

* *Christians who suffer for being a Christian, bring praise and glory to God.*

1Pet. 4. (13) But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.
(14) If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

It is un-American. Not unChurch like. Christians around the world typically do not shrink away from Christian suffering. Nor do they have prosperity Gospel Churches, unless it was started by a prosperity gospel focused American missionary. Its not something you'd typically read the Scriptures and come up with.

* *It does not bring God pleasure to cause us pain. But it does bring Him glory to prove the genuineness of our faith in Him.*

How Firm A Foundation, poetry attributed to Robert Keen

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said,
You, who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?
** Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,
For I am thy God and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen and help thee, and cause thee to stand

Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.

** When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

When through fiery trials thy pathways shall lie,
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake

In His book, "The Privilege of Persecution", Carl Moeler shares some of his discoveries concerning the persecuted church around the world. He says, "suffering believers around the world typically don't say "Why me?". They already know *why* and they rejoice of the honor to suffer for the name of Jesus Christ.

((** Christians who suffer for being a Christian, bring praise and glory to God.*))

B. Suffering for the gospel and not for personal offenses (v15)

** Some Christians are responsible for their own troubles and suffer for their non-Christian lifestyle or decisions they have made.*

1Pet 4: (14) If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. **(15) But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler.** (16) Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.

* Suffering because of our sin, is not suffering for Christ.
It is a disgrace to suffer for doing wrong. It is to be an honor for suffering for being a Christian.

((** Some Christians are suffering through circumstances, not because of their righteous, God honouring lifestyle, but because of their unrighteous, sinful, disgraceful lifestyle.*))

C. I am not Ashamed (or afraid) (v16

** Believers are not ashamed of the name of Jesus!*

1Pet 4: (15) But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. (16) Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Rom 5:3-5 And not only this, but we glory in afflictions also, knowing that afflictions work out patience, (4) and patience works out experience, and experience works out hope. (5) And hope does not make us ashamed, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us.

2Ti 1:8 Therefore you should not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner. But be partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God,

III Looking to Judgment and with the peace of God
(v17-19)

** If you really believed God would judge you for your behavior would you try and change?*

I was talking with someone last week, with whom I disagreed on a very important point of theology. This person said **Eternal Security** was wrong, because it makes people, who claim they are Christians, think that they can live anyway they please and still make it to heaven.

My response was, that is not what the doctrine of **Eternal Security** teaches, but alas, I verbally had to agree with them, because that is what so often happens.

People who claim to be Christians, and may be – yet live in a manner in which makes it appear that they can do whatever they want, ignore whatever it is God may want for them, and think everything is OK, because they think they have this free ticket to heaven.

FALSE! WRONG! WILL NOT HAPPEN! If you have that attitude and live like that – it will not be OK!

A. The Expectation of Judgment (v17

** Judgment or evaluation will be experienced by Christians. Christians will be evaluated (2 Cor. 5:10), but not condemned (Rom. 8:1).*

1) The Household of God (v17a

1Pet 4 (16) Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. **(17) For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?** (18) And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner

** Judgment for believers is like discipline from a Father.*

2) Those disobedient to the gospel (v17b

B. The Promise of Salvation (v18

*

1) The Outcome of the Righteous (v18a

1Pet 4 (17) For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? (18) **And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner**

i.e. from a human perspective.

1) The outcome of the ungodly (v18b)

Can be the same as Christians if they hear and receive the good news of salvation through faith in Christ.

C. The Company of the Faithful (v19)

*

1Pet 4 (18) And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner (19) **Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.**

1Pet. 2:23 When [Christ] was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

APPLIED

How can we apply this? By accurately and realistically considering the joy that is before us.

1) Don't Be Willfully Ignorant

Don't ignore the warnings regarding Christians suffering.

Don't discard the promises and expectations of God that we will suffer

...true believers in Jesus Christ will suffer trouble, hardship and persecution. We must be Biblically informed.

2) Make Prudent Preparations

Do what it takes to prepare your family, your church for the coming persecution.

Teach your family the warnings and promises of suffering and the blessing of enduring. Help prepare them for trials and persecution by clear and purposeful teaching of God's word and the building up and establishing them in their faith.

For Joy in Suffering...

1) ***Be Certain*** that you are suffering for doing what is right. No crime, no sin, but righteously.

Sojourning and Suffering...for the joy that is before us

2) **Be joyful** that you are suffering for the name of Jesus Christ.

3) **Be Aware** that you are being purified and that your faith is being strengthened.

4) **Be Reminded** that God's promises are being fulfilled, and bringing us closer to the return of Jesus Christ and His righteous reign on earth.

Questions Worth Considering

4:12 What should we expect from this life, as Christians? What should you think when these begin to occur? _____

What have you been taught about Christians suffering?

4:13 What should you do? When is that? What will happen as a result?

4:14 What may happen to you as a Christian? What will God do? Who is with you? _____

4:15 You should not be suffering for some things if you are a Christian. What are those things? Do you presently participate in any of these things? What things should you be repenting of?

4:16 When should you not be ashamed? What are you going to do?



Don't close this booklet yet...

without considering this all important question.

Is Jesus Christ the Savior or *your* soul and the Lord of *your* life?

Every person is born guilty of sin and in need of forgiveness.

For all have sinned, and come short
of the glory of God; --*Romans 3:23*

Our sin is against God therefore our forgiveness can only come
from God.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only
begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should
not perish, but have everlasting life. --*John 3:16*

God has appointed His Son as the payment for sins and sent Him to
die in our place.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is
eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
-- *Romans 6:23*

God's love is demonstrated through the sacrificial payment of Jesus
Christ in our place for our sins.

but God shows his love for us in that while we were still
sinners, Christ died for us. ---*Romans 5:8*

For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord
will be saved." -- *Rom 10:13*

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name,
he gave the right to become children of God, - *John 1:12*

Before you close this book, why not be absolutely certain that your
are truly a citizen of God's eternal kingdom and loving family?

Trust in Jesus Christ today and receive
forgiveness for your sins and citizenship into
God's family and His kingdom.

A - Admit you have sinned and are in need of a Savior.

B - Believe Jesus died in your place, and you can no way help yourself.

C - Confess your sins to God. *He already knows.*
- also Confess Jesus as you LORD.

Prayer: Take time to talk to God right now and open your heart and life to His instruction and leadership.

Connect with a local Bible believing, Christ centered church.

Commit yourself to meeting regularly with other Christians who are growing in their faith.

Heb 10:24-25 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, (25) not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Act 2:41-42 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (42) And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

*It is our prayer that you find Jesus Christ to be,
your greatest purpose, your highest calling, your
soul's source and joy, and your all-consuming
passion.*

Other Free Booklets downloadable at www.ChristEFCA.org

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May each lesson bring a growing submission, a deeper obedience and an increase of the righteous reign of the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the fullness of His Spirit, in His Church and throughout our mission field.

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