

SERVING ONE ANOTHER / Sunday School- May 19, 2013

Unifying Topic: HOPE THROUGH STEWARDSHIP

Lesson Text

I. Suffering Like Jesus (1Peter 4:1-2)

II. Sins Of The Past (1Peter 4:3-6)

III. Manifesting Christ's Sacrificial Love (1Peter 4:7-11)

The Main Thought: As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God (1Peter 4:10, KJV).

Unifying Principle: The perilous world in which we live sometimes tempts us to accept the lifestyles and values of others in order to be successful. How can we avoid losing sight of our own integrity and yet find hope for a better life? First Peter 4 tells us that God will strengthen us to serve as good stewards of God's manifold grace.

Lesson Aim: To inform students that God will provide the strength needed to serve as good stewards of His grace.

Life aim: To allow God's grace to enable believers to serve one another by using their spiritual gifts with gratitude in the productive and cooperative building of God's kingdom.

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- 4:1 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;
- 4:2 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.
- 4:3 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:
- 4:4 Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:
- 4:5 Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.
- 4:6 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.
- 4:7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.
- 4:8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.
- 4:9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging.
- 4:10 As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.
- 4:11 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: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

HISTORY:

1Peter 3:13-22 describe the Christian's attitude toward suffering.

3:13 And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?—Paul asked a similar question in Romans 8:34, *'Who can condemn you?'* We have to consider that God is our protector and vindicator. And there is a stipulation placed in this verse, if you follow what is good. When persecution comes, it is to make the Christian strong.

3:14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;—In this life Christians have tribulations and persecutions. Tribulation makes them strong. It is a very strange thing to explain, but the church grows the most during the worst persecution. True Christianity will rise above the problems of life, and go on.

3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:—Christ is to be preferred and consecrated, set-apart in our hearts; live in submissive communion with the Lord. We must be ready to give a reason and be a witness to others who asks of our hope during times of suffering with an humbled heart and with awe. Defend your hope.

3:16 Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. We should do good all the days of our lives, regardless of what the world around us is doing. When we continue to speak absolute truth in love, those who have been speaking evil of us will soon feel guilty and repent. We must set a very high standard of Christianity. When the world looks, we must not even give the appearance of evil.

3:17 For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. Jesus suffered for <http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

doing good, not evil. Christians should be followers of Christ. If we suffer for evil we have done, we have no reward; we deserve the punishment. If we suffer for Christ; great is our reward in heaven.

3:18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:— Jesus Christ {who knew no sin} took upon His body, the sin of us all. He had no sin of His own. He was the Righteous One. He gave us in return His righteousness, which justified us before the Father.

3:19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;— The Spirit of Jesus went into the place of abyss, imprisonment of the spirits departed from this earth and preached to those who were disobedient. He proclaimed the victory of His death and resurrection to the spirits in prison and to the disobedient of Noah's day imprisoned in hell. It means that right after the cross and His resurrection he went before the spirits in prison and proclaimed that God's promise of salvation was fulfilled; completed in Him, the Savior of the world. It does not say that they were given a second chance.

3:20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. Noah found favor in the sight of the Lord, and saved Noah and his wife, his three sons, and their wives. These 8 people would repopulate the earth. The "*number eight*" means new beginnings. God does not leave the slightest detail out. "*Saved by water*" intrigued me because it's the very element that drowned everyone on the earth, but saved eight. They were saved from the water by the water. The water...

- bore up the ark and saved them through the judgment of God.
- delivered them from the ridicule and mockery of the evil men.
- put to death the old world and gave them the hope of a new world.
- saved the race of man and created a new people of God.
- delivered them from the old world right into the new world.

3:21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:— This figure or picture refers to what had happened to Noah and his family. The water of the flood is a picture of baptism. The water which saved Noah and his family is a type of the cleansing that saves us. What Peter is saying, the figure or picture of baptism resembles the water that saved Noah and his family. ¹The water is like the flood that washed away all the evil in the days of Noah. The boat is like salvation that saves people from death.

- The flooding waters of Noah's day pictures the judgment of God upon sin. The flooding waters pictures how man was saved from a corruptible world and carried into a new world.
- The baptismal water pictures the judgment of God upon Christ, a judgment of death that was due sinners. It pictures how man is saved from a corruptible life and world and carried into a new life and world by the resurrection of Christ. A Christian comes out of the baptism water and begins a new life.

Now Peter says that baptism now saves us, but he hastens to explain what he means. He is not saying that the water or act of baptism saves us for no matter how much we may cleanse the outside with the most scrupulous care, it is the cleansing of a clear conscience wrought by the power of the resurrection that saves a person. Baptism does not wash away the filth of the flesh or soul; not the outward form of baptism. One has engaged in water baptism because he has already been made clean by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ which in turn gives one a clear conscience toward God in believing by faith that God has raised Jesus has from the dead. It is the transformation that takes place in our heart. We must turn our heart over to Jesus. Water baptism is very important. It confirms to the world, what has gone on in our heart. Jesus defeated sin for the Christian on the cross. He defeated death when He rose from the tomb. Therefore, we believe by faith our salvation is of the Lord Jesus Christ.

3:22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him. Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father, because He has completed His work of salvation.

LESSON:

1Peter 4:1-2 Suffering Like Jesus

¹ <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/1peter-lbw.htm>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

This describes Christ's example in suffering.

4:1 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;— Christ suffered the cruelty of the cross of Calvary for us. We can do no less for Him if it be necessary. Since Christ suffered physical pain, we must arm ourselves with the same attitude He had; being ready to suffer, too. How can the believer handle and conquer such persecution? He should **arm himself with the mind of Jesus Christ.** What does this mean?

1. **First, die to self and deny oneself.**

Jesus suffered to the ultimate degree for us in the flesh. The person who suffers in the flesh has "*ceased from sin.*" When the world persecutes us, we do not want to suffer and bear the judgment of ridicule, mockery, and abuse of men, but if we arm ourselves with the mind of Christ— deny our fleshly desires and suffer for Christ and for the salvation of men, then, we deny sin. We do just what Christ did: we deny and live righteously. Luke 9:23 says If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. This is how we arm with the mind of Christ— having that same attitude as Christ suffered; suffering in the flesh, thereby ceasing from sin. ...**for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;**— There is a hint of two things to see from this: I think the latter.

- i. In the literal sense, the man who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin because of physical death; referring to the course of this present life.
- ii. In the moral and spiritual sense, the man who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin because he has and through the Spirit mortified the deeds of the flesh where we no longer have that connection with sin. Therefore, as Jesus has suffered and died to sin, so have we! A godly life convicts them and demands that they live like Christ.

4:2 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. We're talking about the person who has ceased from sin. ²He has become, through the death of Christ, dead to the world and to the former things which influenced him, in order that he should hereafter live not to the lusts of the flesh but...

2. **Secondly, do the will of God, by doing it for the rest of his life.**

The phrase, "*lusts of men*" is plural, and gives the picture of the believer being pulled every which way by different persons or groups; pulled to live like the world lives, fulfilling the desires and lusts of the flesh: houses, wealth, position, power, drink, sex, partying, recreation. God's will is for the believer to live pure and righteous lives and to focus upon proclaiming the gospel of eternal life to a lost and dying world. This is how we arm with the mind of Christ—doing the Will of God for the rest of our lives, instead of the wants and desires (lusts) of the men.

1Peter 4:3-6 Sins Of The Past

4:3 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:

3. **Third, be fed up with sin.**

The believer's life is divided into two parts: his old life and his new life. In his old life, he sinned enough. He has already followed the desires and lusts of the ungodly (the will of the Gentiles) enough. He had already worked the will of the ungodly; he had already walked after them, walked just as they walked, and enough is enough. This verse mentions six sins he has walked in:

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| 1. <i>Lasciviousness</i> - shameless indecency | 4. <i>Revellings</i> - carousing, wild parties, orgies |
| 2. <i>Lusts</i> - strong desire, craving, passion | 5. <i>Banqueting</i> - drinking parties, getting drunk |
| 3. <i>Excess of wine</i> - drunkenness affecting one's senses | 6. <i>Abominable Idolatries</i> - worship of idols |

This is how we arm with the mind of Christ—we have to be fed up with sin and not walk in the desires of sin.

4:4 Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:

4. **Fourth, bear the strange look from the world and head in a different direction.**

² http://bible.cc/1_peter/4-2.htm

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

³When people become Christians, their lives change. This happens because the Spirit of Jesus is now alive in them. They give up their evil behavior. Now they worship God. When we give up sins like lewdness, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, etc., those in the world may think it strange. They often ridicule, mock, and withdraw from you because you no longer share with them in the things they used to do; they may hate and insult you because of this. This is how we arm with the mind of Christ—bear the strange look from the world and head in a different direction.

4:5 Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. Those that you once ran with in the world are those that will give account. The worldly and ungodly shall be judged. They shall give an account to Christ for all their ridicule, abuse, and persecution of believers; when they spoke evil of you. And scripture is clear: *Christ is ready to judge both the living and the dead 2Tim.4:1.*

4:6 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. This is the reason the gospel had to be preached—to enable people to give an account, for judgment comes against those that are dead.

- The gospel was preached in order to judge them while they were still men in the flesh.
- The gospel was preached in order to give them life, a spiritual life, a life that is just like God's life—eternal.

Since that is true, those who have already died will have to give an account at the judgment (still future) of their response to the preaching of the gospel that they heard while they were alive. All for one purpose: that they may live in the spirit as God already does. This is for all mankind.

5. **Fifth, follow the example of believers who have gone before.**

Because everyone will give account of his life to God, Christians were to preach the gospel. Those to whom the gospel was preached prior to Peter's writing, heard the judgment and conviction of the gospel while they were living, and they in turn accepted; they will escape the judgment to come.

These verses are a strong encouragement to endure suffering. Christ has assured our ultimate victory, and to turn back is to incur God's punishment. This is how we arm with the mind of Christ—follow the example of believers who have gone before and have accepted Christ.

1Peter 4:7-11 Manifesting Christ's Sacrificial Love

4:7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. All things are soon to be consummated; the climax of history is at hand. Jesus Christ is returning and He is returning soon. "Peter says *"the end of all times is at hand"*, so that they will not be fooled into thinking that judgment is a long way off or even that it will never come. What are we to be manifesting? Peter mentions **five things**:

1. Be **sober**, clear-minded, serious, sound mind, in control of oneself, self-restrained. Get rid of the excess, the clutter that hinders you. Peter says that there's something vitally important coming and so get rid of everything that so easily entangles you.
2. Be **watchful** in your prayers--keeping the mind alert, active, controlled thoughts while praying for all things. "*Watch*" means to stay sober and alert and awake at all times; So that you will be free to pray with a calm and collected spirit that is conducive to the act of praying.

4:8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

3. Be **fervent** in your love for one another. "*Fervent*" means to stretch and reach out; to strain and exert to the utmost degree just as an athlete in a race; to be put before all else. By expressing a deep love for others, we can be an encouragement to them to "*carry on*" and continue in their pursuit of godliness and love for others.

4:9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

4. Be **hospitable**. Why? For love, care, ministry, close fellowship, and outreach can flow well without you

³ <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/1peter-lbw.htm>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

grudging it. We must not be unwilling to show love in welcoming strangers.

4:10 As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another,— Be willing to **use your spiritual gifts** ministering as good stewards of God. *“Gift”* means the very special ability given to the believer by God. It is not a natural talent but a spiritual gift.

- We minister our spiritual gifts when we serve by speaking the Word of God (teaching, preaching, exhortation, or prophecy etc.).
- We minister our spiritual gifts when we depend upon God to do the speaking as we listen to the Holy Spirit.
- We minister our spiritual gifts when we serve so that God may be glorified in all things (visit, counsel, give etc). By living out our spiritual gifts we are bringing praise and glory to God, not us.

4:10b ...as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. The steward was a slave who was given the responsibility of the master’s estate; both his home and property. He was in full charge of all the affairs of the master. The believer is the steward of God; he is in full charge of the grace and gift which God has given him. God has made everyone able to do something. Often God gives people more than one gift. There are various gifts. No one else can look after or use your gift that you have; you have full charge over it. No one can exercises that gift accept you the believer. It is not to be lying dormant, when the master returns. As each has been given a gift, use it to serve one another.

4:11 If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God;— Believers are to serve by speaking the Word of God. This would include such gifts as teaching, preaching, exhortation, prophesy, and other gifts that involve proclaiming the Word of God. Speak as the oracles of God, meaning let God speak through us; depending upon God and God alone in accordance with the truth which God had revealed. All is to be done to benefit other believers in the body of Christ.

4:11b ...if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth:—This would include such gifts as hospitality, visiting, mercy, giving, and the other gifts of ministering to people. The believer who ministers is to do it in the ability and strength of the Lord. We are also acknowledging that our strength and ability comes from God and God alone.

4:11c ...that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Believers are to serve so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. This is the sole aim of the believer. He does not preach or teach to draw attention and gain a name for himself. He proclaims God’s Word in order to glorify God through Jesus Christ. He does not minister, visit, or give to secure recognition, honor, and praise. He ministers to stir praise and thanksgiving to God in the name of Jesus Christ. He deserves the glory, to whom praise and dominion lives in forever.

SUMMARY:

⁴The theme of suffering for righteousness' sake continues. Just as Christ was willing to suffer for us in the flesh, we should have the same attitude and strive to live for the will of God instead of the lusts of men. When we give up sins like lewdness, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, etc., those in the world may think it strange. Yet they themselves will give an account to Him who will judge both the living and the dead by the gospel preached to those who are dead (1-6).

Living in the end times, Peter admonishes Christians to be serious and watchful in their prayers, fervent in their love for one another, and hospitable to one another without grumbling. They are to make use of their gifts as good stewards of God's manifold grace, whether it is in speaking or serving, using such abilities to glorify God through Christ who has all authority and power (7-11).

APPLICATION:

When we go through our sufferings think about Jesus, who went sacrificed much more. Since Jesus Christ has gained the victory, our service unto Him should be done in love, manifesting our gifts as a good steward.

⁴ http://executableoutlines.com/1pet/1pet_04.htm
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>