

How then shall we live?
Week 7: Jesus' attitude

This teaching series is called "How then shall we live". What does it look like for a person to **live for Jesus and live like Jesus** in the culture we have right now?

Peter is writing this letter to a group of churches in Asia Minor, which would be modern day Turkey. They are **poor, marginalized, resident aliens**. They are **receiving resistance and outright persecution** because they are poor and not a part of society, but then you add on that they are Christ followers. There are **plenty of reasons** why they don't fit.

Peter is trying to help them answer that question. The basic message is not to **fight back, rebel against Greek Roman culture, but work with it.** Let them **see how differently you live, how you respect others** without compromising Christ's teachings, and how **gentle** you are. Peter tells them how this works in relation to **government**. In their case, government **that isn't on their side**, or even acknowledge them other than basic mistrust. He talks about **slaves and masters** because **that was a reality in that culture**, but also probably in the church. He talks about **wives with unbelieving husbands** and **husbands with their wives**. He talks about how to do this in **the church** and in the world around them.

A major theme we are seeing is how they will suffer for Christ in that type of culture.

Today we are in a post-Christian culture. We don't have the kind of **suffering** or persecution that these people had to fear. We also don't have the kind of suffering and persecution that many of our brothers and sisters in Christ have in places like **Syria and India**. But we do have a culture that is **going in the opposite direction as Christ**. We have a culture that doesn't have people who have **even the basic knowledge of Christ** and his teaching. Instead, we have a culture that is **materialistic, consumer driven, pleasure focused**. **Define yourself however you want, just make sure when you do, you get your kind of culture.**

To help you with this study, we have **journals that** are available. They are **free**. You can mark right on the scripture pages and take notes and, even more important, write what you hear God saying to you about how you should live. There are also **pens that** are in the pockets on the back of the seats.

Today we are looking at **chapter 4**. Peter picks right back up with **this idea of suffering** as a part of how we are to live for Jesus, like Jesus. "**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, 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 For 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. 1 Peter 4:1-6

Let's look specifically at verse 1 again. "**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 first challenge is to **arm yourself** with the same way of thinking as Jesus. **To live for Jesus and like Jesus in that culture it was mandatory that they not just try to act like Jesus, but think like Jesus.** Another word for this is to have...**The same attitude as Jesus.** Write that phrase in your journal **across from verse 1.**

This is the foundation of what Peter is going to teach them. They need to say attitude, as Jesus did. Here's a definition for you. Attitude means, **"to have a settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, typically one that is reflected in a person's behavior."**

What is this attitude, or way of thinking? We'll let Paul speak for himself. Verses 6-11 of Philippians 2 says, "**Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a**

human being. When he appeared in human form, he **humbled himself in obedience to God** and died a criminal's death on a cross. Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Philipians 2:6-11

What do we see all through this description of Jesus' attitude? **We see that he was willing to humble himself, take a lower position than was rightfully his and that leads to suffering. In obedience to his father, he was willing to suffer, even to the point of death.**

Beginning back in chapter 2, the word suffering is used over and over in this teaching on how they should live. That is the next thing I want you to write in your journal. **Write this phrase by verse 1 and mark the other references... Willing to Suffer...for good.**

Jesus was willing to suffer for good, for what His Heavenly father asked him to do.

This is woven throughout this section of Peter's teaching. It emphasized because it is **absolutely a vital part of Jesus' attitude** that we must have.

What if personal fulfillment, status were more important than His Heavenly Father's commands? **He would not have suffered and we would be lost.**

It's not natural for us and it wasn't natural for them. It might be **even more of a foreign concept in America** because we don't ever want to think about suffering being a thing to lean into. We have in America **"the pursuit of happiness"** as one of our clear rights. **I love my country, but sometimes our thinking is more about trying to figure out ways of being happy that don't require any suffering.**

In the first verses of this letter Peter says this about where our true happiness can be found. **"According to God's great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you..."** 1 Peter 1:3b-4

All of this is "kept in heaven," that means into eternity. That is the **second part of Jesus' attitude or way of thinking** that we must have is...**Keep eternity in focus.**

All that we see here that God is doing is brought to a culmination in **eternity, the forever life with God.** In chapter 4, Peter writes it his way. **The end of all things is at hand; therefore be... 1 Peter 4:7** Circle that word, **"therefore"**. Remember the question we asked you to ask in our study guide. **What is the "therefore" there for?** This is in your **study guide.** This is to help you be able to handle scripture on your own. If you don't have one, we can get you one. (**Read Bible Study rules** and back of journal)

"Therefore" is a way of **connecting what Peter has just said** with what he is about to say. What he is about to say is **based upon what he has been talking about.** **Eternity is coming and, because of that, you need to follow what I am about to say.**

It's like Peter is telling us to **keep our eyes on the prize.** This world is not all there is. But he immediately connects focusing on eternity with **some very practical things.** Focusing on eternity is **not, take a painkiller and a sleeping pill** so that you can handle this disastrous place and peacefully slide into heaven.

The kingdom is to come on earth as it is in heaven. We get to **make the kingdom present** for others right here and right now.

Why would this world matter, if one day all of us are going to be fertilizing daffodils? I'm looking for a place where I hear a loud shout from the throne, saying, **"Look, God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever."** And the one sitting on the throne said, **"Look, I am making everything new!"** And then he said to me, **"Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true."**
Revelation 21:3b-5

When we see God making all things new. That is the restoration of God's rule, which is The Kingdom of God! The world Peter is talking about and ours today are desperate to see all things being made new.

Let's go back to verse 7 and see what the "therefore" is there for and see these very practical things about being eternity focused. "The end of all things is at hand; therefore be (circle) **self-controlled and sober-minded** for the sake of your prayers. Above all, **keep loving one another earnestly**, since love covers a multitude of sins. **Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.**" 1 Peter 4:7-10

Because we are keeping our focus on eternity, we are to be self-controlled and sober minded. **Sober minded means to keep your mind on eternity that is coming toward us.** It is about focus. **My thinking about now is affected by my undying belief that there is an eternity with God after all things are made new.** Sober minded or **focused on reality, not some distorted view of reality.** That is the reality that says, "don't think about tomorrow, today is all we have." That's a really stupid and dangerous way to think. **It's like being drunk, which changes our view of reality.**

Those who don't keep focused on eternity won't be ready for it. Again, it's not about being so other worldly that you are of no good in this world. It's not about viewing this world as simply **the sinking ship we need to get off of** before it goes under. That's not sober minded keeping eternity in focus.

That's like **not studying** or going to class all semester, acting like there isn't a final exam at the end. **That's not living in reality.**

It's living today in a way that is practicing for an eternity with Jesus in his presence, in his kingdom where all things have been put right and made new.

Love now like the love that you will receive in eternity. Loving like Jesus now is a little taste of eternity when that is all day every day.

What kind of love is that you may ask? It's Jesus' style love that is willing to sacrifice and even suffers for others. That brings us back to our first Jesus attitude "willing to suffer for good," more appropriately for the good of others. That's love that keeps your eyes on eternity, the desired end.

There are two forces that battle these two Jesus attitudes that we must have in our post-Christian culture. It's the same for them as it is for us. Yes, the persecution was more intense and the stakes could be life and death. But our "flesh" and "the world" are these two forces...

Our flesh is not our physical body because everything God created is good. Our flesh is the way the Bible describes those desires that will destroy our relationship and us with God. They are anti-God. Things like self-focus, seeking my own fulfillment, scratching whatever the itch is, and making sure I get mine.

Look back at that list in the beginning of chapter 4, "living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry... 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."

"The world" as a force is again not talking about what God created. The world are the systems, a cultural pull that encourages us to indulge what our fleshly desires wants. It is another voice agreeing that it is right and good to scratch that itch. The world fast tracks what our flesh is telling us we need that will make us happy and fulfilled.

Suffering with and for Jesus is about denying self, the flesh, and resisting the pull of the world that encourages what my flesh wants to indulge.

Peter tells us to show deep love for one another. But how can we truly show deep love for others when we are still self-absorbed? We have to get over ourselves, deny our own desires in order to focus on other people's desires and needs.

The world and our flesh can create fear to keep us from focusing on eternity by loving and even showing hospitality. We fear opening ourselves up to others so we **keep a safe distance** and we **don't let people in**. This kind of fear is not for Christ followers. Another basic understanding that Peter has been talking about is **the fear of God, the awestruck amazement that he could hold me to account for my sin, but amazingly he doesn't when I trust in Jesus**. In other words...**"Don't be afraid of those who want to kill your body they cannot touch your soul. Fear only God, who can destroy both soul and body in hell."** Matthew 10:28

Let's pick back up at verse 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.** ¹⁴ **If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.** 1 Peter 4:12-14

Wow, what a promise for these marginalized persecuted outcasts drowning in a culture where they don't fit. But, they aren't drowning. They are joining Jesus. Even when they are insulted the spirit of God rests upon them.

What would this post Christian, materialistic, consumeristic, self-absorbed, angry culture see if we were ready to suffer instead of trying to defend our rights with screaming and yelling? What would this culture see if we were so focused on eternity that it made us self-controlled, loved each other earnestly, showed hospitality without grumbling, used our God given gifts to serve others and were stewards of the unmerited grace we have received from Jesus? What would they see? They would see a different way of living. They would see the kingdom being made present by us. They will see things being made new. They will see Jesus.

How have I seen people displaying the same attitude of Jesus by being willing to suffer and keep their focus on eternity that is coming?

Some of you may not know my story, most of you do. Our eldest son, Quinten, was killed by a drunk driver about six years ago. We found out about it here, in this place, with many of these people. The people of Eagle Ridge Church of God **entered our suffering and served us, sacrificed for us.**

They, whether they knew it or not, were focused on eternity and helped us do that. We were able to focus on eternity where what was wrong would be put right and made new.

People made phone calls for us, took care of my **preaching** and other things scheduled, **found our kids and brought them to us, cried with us,** went to EMU to **pick up Hannah** so she didn't have to drive, people were **kneeling, praying** when we left the building, others **organized meals for us** and our family who were coming to see us.

Now I get to do the same every time I'm allowed to enter someone else's suffering or sadness, particularly at funerals.

Dave and Deb, so willing to sacrifice and even suffer, that they moved to a new town, give up a really good job for two kingdom jobs with low pay. That takes not just a willingness to suffer, but also a focus on eternity.

People giving up their retirement for Cultivate enter into people's lives, making the kingdom present. We meet **broken people at the Mall** and we will meet more in Sanford when that opens soon. There is suffering that could happen that wouldn't happen if **you just stayed home, took a pottery class or played golf.**

What do you say we do something about this, not just talk about it?

Steps of Obedience

I am going to ask you two questions. The first one centers around something we are holding onto that keeps us from doing the will of God. **1. What is God asking you to let go of or deny yourself?** Are we willing to let go of the things of this world, the guilt, the shame, so we can see God more clearly?

As a part of hearing God's voice about letting go or denying, I would encourage you to go back to chapter 2 through the end of 1 Peter and make a list of all of the things he says about suffering in your journal. Then look at that list and ask God to speak to you.

The second question has more to do with what we do after letting go of these things. We have to grab onto something else that brings us healing, instead of this pain we are carrying around with us. To let go of is to have the attitude of Christ, it is a willingness to suffer loss.

For example, to cure a cut on our body, we need to do more than just put down the knife. We need to get a Band-Aid, possibly some antiseptic. Second question, **2, What are we going to grab onto that can lead to this healing? Who can I lean on to help me through this?** James 5:16 says, **"Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results." James 5:16**

I'm going to stick around up here to anoint and pray for anyone who wants God to make them a part of revival by helping you to have these Jesus attitudes.