

"READY OR NOT!"

1 Peter 4:7-11

Hide and Seek: *"Here I come, ready or not!"*

Closer the time got, the more desperate we were to get in place and be ready.

As adults, we don't play that game as often.

But we all know the feeling of what it is like *to work under pressure*.

In college, staying up all night writing a paper or cramming for a test.

We seem to need a deadline in order to get the job done.

***As deadline gets closer,
we get more intense about getting the job done.***

That's what Peter is saying in this chapter:

The Deadline's getting closer!

Christ says: "Here I come, ready or not!"

The end is near He's coming soon

Summary wraps up what he's been saying about importance of our testimony

• in these days • in the light of our suffering

We should be living in light of fact that Jesus is coming soon.

Five commands—

In essence, we should do everything for God's glory.

Peter promotes idea that we should imitate Christ's example and live to do God's will, even when the world around us is headed in the opposite direction and doesn't understand the way we are going.

OUR EXAMPLE BEFORE THE WORLD 4:3-11

Peter explains what life that conforms to God's will looks like.

Negative Perspective:

We won't continue to live the same as others 4:3-6

We used to live that way.

Others still don't understand why we don't join them.

As a result, they mistreat us.

In the end, they'll have to give account to God for their actions.

Positive Perspective:

We live in a way which conforms to God's will 4:7-11

Presented in light of ultimate judgment about to come. **4:6** *"For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to men in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit."*

People are condemned according to human standards;

that judgment results in physical death

God gives spiritual life according to His righteous judgment.

This judgment is now at hand.

The settling of accounts, the end of all things, is near.

The end is near

fulfillment draws near

completion approaches

consummation comes

Since we're living in last days and deadline's approaching...

Wiersbe paraphrases: "If you want to make the best use of the rest of your time, live in the light of the return of Jesus Christ."

Heb. 10:25 *"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the day approaching."*

Jas. 5:8-9 *"You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. . . . The Judge is standing at the door."*

Both passages deal with how we ought to live when faced with unjust suffering on account of our faith in Christ as the end draws near.

WE NEED A PROPER FOCUS ON GOD **4:7** *"The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray."*

1) KEEP YOUR HEAD SCREWED ON STRAIGHT **4:7a**

See things from God's perspective.

Therefore, **we ought to be sober** ("of sound judgment" <= *sophronéo*)

(of sound mind—Lat., *sanae mentis*)

show self-control, come to one's senses

The opposite of this is to lose it—frenzy, madness

In the concerns of suffering we could panic.

We could lose our perspective.

We will not go off the deep end, or out on a tangent

We will face things realistically, as God sees them.

This is prerequisite for church leaders and church members in general:

Church leaders: **1 Tim. 3:2**

“Now the overseer must be . . . self-controlled”

Church member: **Tit. 2:1-12**; Various specific uses: older men, women, young men, etc.

Rom. 12:3 *“Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment...”*

When the church is sitting under the gun, sound judgment is essential.

The individual who lives

with a view to the imminent coming of our Lord,
with proper perspective,
with his focus fixed on God and His perspective,
will shape his life accordingly.

We must learn to see things which are happening from God's viewpoint.

i.e., understand what God is doing
understand what He wants from us.

In other words, keep our head screwed on straight.

2) BE ALERT IN PRAYER 4:7b KJV – “Watch unto prayer”

*“Be clear-minded and **disciplined** [=sober; sober minded] for prayer.”*

nepho–lit. to drink no wine

metaph. to be sober, dispassionate

fig.– free from every form of mental and spiritual
“drunkenness”,

from excess passion, rashness, confusion.

Idea of alertness and self-control—opposite of drunken or asleep (1 Thess. 5:6-8)

This characteristic may be especially significant to Peter

He slept when he should have been alert and praying

Mark 14:37-40

He then panicked and lost it.

He now asks the opposite of these believers—i.e., of us!

Used of self-control practiced by athletes

disciplined self-control to achieve a desired end

**We should calm down and get control of ourselves
so we can pray about things that disturb us.**

Eph. 6:18; Col. 4:2

Wiersbe—[As it relates to our focus on God,] "an expectant attitude toward Christ's return involves a serious, balanced mind, and an alert, awake prayer life. The test of our commitment to the doctrine of Christ's return is not our ability to draw charts or discern signs, but our thinking and praying. *If our thinking and praying are right, our living should be right.*"

Dauids—"Proper prayer is not an "opiate" or escape, but rather a function of *clear vision and a seeking of even clearer vision from God*. It is only through clear communication with headquarters that a soldier can effectively stand guard."

**WE NEED A PROPER FOCUS ON ONE ANOTHER
4:8-11**

**If we're looking for His return,
we'll think of others and seek their benefit.**

[Above all else, . . .]

3) MAINTAIN A DEEP LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER 4:8

“Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.”

... even when we've been hurt or let down.

1 Pet. 1:22; Jn. 13:34-35

We should love one another deeply.

Especially in times of suffering and affliction,

Christians must learn to love one another and be united in heart.

The kind of love necessary is that which is willing to overlook offenses of others who mistreat or fail us in midst of our suffering.

Love that doesn't consider merit.

Fervent—Literally, used of athletes straining to reach the tape or clear the bar.

Final, intense stretch for the goal.

Genuine love takes a lot of work.

It doesn't come naturally and it isn't easy.

It takes that zealous stretching toward the goal.

We have to learn to love one another, even as God has loved us.

That wasn't easy either. We aren't so loveable ourselves.

Genuine love is forgiving.

Genuine love covers a multitude of sins—why mention that here?

Because of the offenses against other brethren in affliction.

3:8-9; Prov. 10:12; Jas. 5:20

We don't *love* others if we delight in finding and exposing faults and sins. Love doesn't keep score; it doesn't make a list of wrongs committed. It forgives those who have sinned against us. This isn't *condoning* sin.

If we love someone, we'll be concerned and grieved to see the consequences of sin hurt that one, and those around him or her.

It *covers* sin so we don't keep seeing it (i.e., holding it against someone, judging, criticizing, and speaking evil of them) or publishing it to everyone else.

Gen. 9:18-27 (Noah vs. Ham & vs. the other two sons).

[Our love isn't just fervent and forgiving; it's practical:]

4) BE HOSPITABLE 4:9

"Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling."

Heb. 13:2 *"Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it."*

Share our homes with others, in generous (uncomplaining) hospitality.

Not to be done to get someone to pay us back and invite us to their house.

If you're showing hospitality to manipulate others and get something from them, you're acting like a Pharisee (Lk. 14:12-14).

We're to show hospitality to those who pass through and need help, without complaining about it.

Hospitality = love for strangers, for those who are unknown to us personally. 3 Jn. 5-8

 xenophobia => "fear of strangers"

 philoxenia => "love of strangers"

Early churches met in homes

 Ministers traveled through—"inns" were unsafe morally and physically.

Early Christians were often thrown out of their homes

All these need the hospitality of brothers and sisters in Christ.

Helping those who pass through

Without complaining—murmuring—re. freeloaders, "people always looking for handouts", etc.

It's easy to complain about why everyone comes to us, or why so and so doesn't move on. We ought to count it a privilege and do it gladly.

 Foreign students; missionaries; musical groups

 Alternative housing for pregnant unwed mothers, instead of abortion

How about hospitality as greeting strangers—even at church?

 We have a greeting committee

 Are WE greeting others? Making them feel welcome?

Years ago, someone wrote to "Dear Abby:" "I'm completing the 2nd year of a 3-year survey on hospitality, or lack of it, in churches. To date, of 195 churches I've visited, I was spoken to in only one by someone other than an official greeter—that was to ask me to move my feet."

Are we showing hospitality?

Do we, in fact, love strangers who come our way?

Or, do we avoid them?

In light of nearness of our Lord's return, we ought to show love for people who are unknown to us, who pass our way and need help.

5) USE OUR GIFTS TO SERVE EACH OTHER

4:10-11

"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. 11 If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen."

1 Cor. 12:7; Eph. 4:11-16

Finally, we ought to use the gifts God has given us to serve one another, and to glorify God.

Just as each one received a "grace"; favor, free gift.

Each of us is a minister and has been given some ministry.

We should use our gifts to serve others

As good administrator of the "multi-colored", multi-faceted grace of God

Recognizes that it belongs to God

Required to be faithful

On Trinidad is a crater in an extinct volcano, filled with pitch. Its surface is firm enough for people to walk on, although gas escapes from below, forming bubbles here and there. For decades loads of asphalt have been dug from this tar-like lake and shipped to all parts of the world for use in paving roads. No

matter how large a hole is made in the pitch, it doesn't remain more than 72 hours because it fills up from below. Shiploads of asphalt have been taken out of this crater for 75 years, yet it never runs empty. Drillings reveal that this black, gum-like substance is still found at a depth of 280 feet. The supply seems to be endless.

God's infinite grace is like that, it is superabundant and never diminishes. No matter how great our problems, His love and His grace are never exhausted! They keep showing themselves in new ways. No matter how much we use them.

Two kinds of gifts: speaking and serving

Gifts that speak: *Words*

What we say should be conformed to what God has said

I received a call from—a young man who wants a religion that will let him feel good about a lifestyle *he* knows is wrong. He wants someone to tell him it's alright. I can't do that. We have to speak in agreement with what God has said, not what man wants to hear!

Churches are getting closer and closer to the kind of religion that tells people what they want to hear—even “Bible-believing churches.” Peter says don't do it! Speak what God has spoken, not what people want to hear.

A friend of mine was sharing his surprise at direction one of major denominations was taking in supporting and ordaining those who have chosen a lifestyle that's prohibited in God's Word. That's no surprise! That's what always happens when you start telling people what they want to hear, instead of what God has said.

Our church runs the same risk, *UNLESS WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO SPEAK THE ORACLES OF GOD!*—What He has spoken!

People don't come to God's house to hear another man's philosophy.

We hear too much of that already.

We come here to listen to God's voice.

One who is called by God to speak to God's people better use His Word.

Gifts that serve: *Deeds*—

We should serve one another as long as God gives us strength.

Dauids—"It probably covers all those deeds one Christian does for another: administration, care for the poor and sick (including contributing funds, distributing funds, and physical care), healing, and similar acts that express God's love and mercy in concrete form."

Our service is to be done with the strength which God supplies
Supply <= lit.-"to lead a chorus"

Later describes person who paid to supply the chorus.

God has ordered the job done; He will pay the expenses;

He will supply whatever they need to do it.

metaph. – to take the lead, to minister to, to supply,

to furnish, to furnish abundantly => to be well-supplied

As long as God gives us the strength, we are to keep on serving.

Doesn't depend on whether I *feel like it* or not.

WE NEED A PROPER PURPOSE: TO GLORIFY GOD

4:11b *"So that in all things God may be praised through Jesus*

Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen."

The purpose– that God may be glorified *in everything*

He is glorified through Jesus Christ

Jesus deserves all the glory

Jesus deserves all strength (power, might, sovereignty) forever.

Barclay: "A new grace and glory would enter the church if all church people ceased doing things for themselves and did them for God."

Matt. 5:16; 1 Pet. 2:12

In summary, we do all this in order to glorify God for what may be one last time.

This may be our last chance.

WHAT DIFFERENCE SHOULD THE DEADLINE MAKE IN MY LIFE?