

Arming Yourself Against Unjust Suffering (Pt.2)

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1 Peter / 1 Peter 4:3-6

INTRODUCTION

1. We have the privilege this morning to study the Word of God
2. In doing that, let me invite you to turn in your Bibles to 1 Peter chapter 4
3. Last Lord's Day we began chapter 4 and looked at the first two verses
4. Today we are continuing with verses 3 through 6
5. All 6 verses serve as one unit of thought
6. Listen as I began reading at verse 1
7. Read [1 Peter 4:1-6](#).
8. In our last time together, we saw in the first 2 verses Peter's command to "arm yourself against unjust suffering"
9. He began verse 1 with "therefore" and took us back to 3:18 with the example of Christ
10. [1 Peter 3:18](#) says, "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the Just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit."
11. The terms "died," "put to death in the flesh," "suffered in the flesh" --- all refer to His physical death on the cross
12. Jesus died and He offers to all persecuted believers an example of suffering
13. And since that is the case, we are commanded to "arm" ourselves
14. We saw the word "arm" (hoplizo) is a military term that speaks of preparation for battle
15. It's noun form occurs in [2 Corinthians 10:4](#) to speak of "weapons"
16. Another form of the word occurs in [Ephesians 6:11](#) to speak of armor
17. So Peter is saying they are to arm themselves with weapons or to put on as armor
18. What are the "weapons" or "armor"?
19. Peter answers that in the next phrase
20. He says to "arm yourself also with the same purpose"

21. The word “purpose” (ennoia) is translated “attitude” in the NIV but it means the “same mind, the same idea, the same principle, the same thought”
22. As Christ suffered and died, they needed to prepare themselves to suffer and possibly die
23. To do this they needed the same mind Christ had
24. He was “willing” to die
25. He laid “down His life for the sheep” ([Jn.10:11](#)).
26. He “humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” ([Phil.2:8](#))
27. So the greatest weapon or armor you have is a “willingness” to die if God wills
28. That’s the worst anyone can do to you
29. But it is also the best they can do
30. When you have that mindset you have ultimately thwarted your persecutors
31. Peter mentions at the end of verse 1 what happens when you die
32. You’ve “ceased from sin”
33. This is your ultimate triumph!
34. So with that thought you live the here and now “no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God” (v.2)
35. Now in verses 3-6, Peter continues to elaborate on the here and now by first mentioning...

The Past (v.3)

This is how they used to live before believing in Christ

Peter says, “For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries”

1. Notice the past tense language he uses: “time already past,” “have carried out,” “having pursued”
2. The sins listed here are what Jesus suffered and died for
3. This is also what they had repented from when coming to Christ
4. This is now in the past
5. Peter says the time that has already past was “sufficient” (arketos, adj) or “more than enough-- -too much in fact” (Hiebert)
6. They had done their full duty and more in the past service of sin (Hiebert)

7. The word “past” (parerchomai) occurs in the perfect tense to denote “that their past life is now a closed chapter” (Hiebert)
8. It is completed and their present life shows it
9. This was true of the Corinthians when Paul said in [1 Corinthians 6:11](#), “Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.”
10. We owe nothing to the flesh, our past is where it belongs...in the past
11. [Charles Spurgeon](#) wrote, “I am looking unto Jesus, and trusting myself entirely with Him to save me, and I feel in my heart that He has saved me. Now I cannot live as I once lived; I cannot sin as I once sinned. I must have done with sin if I have, indeed, trusted in Christ.”
12. Paul also spoke this same way to Titus in [Titus 3:3-5](#), “3 For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. 4 But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, 5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,”
13. He spoke of this also in past tense to the Ephesians when he said in [Ephesians 2:1-3](#), “1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.”
14. We had more than enough time doing what the Gentiles did
15. They “pursued” (poreuomai, perf. middle or passive part.) means, “to go, proceed, travel.” it is used figuratively, “to conduct oneself, life, walk”
16. By the use of that verb, “life is compared to a journey, but also in order to denote the eagerness with which they go on from sin to sin” (Hiebert).
17. Peter’s readers had had a whole life full of opportunity to sin, that is more than enough to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles (the unconverted peoples) and to have lived to fulfill sinful passions” (MacArthur)
18. 6 terms describe how they lived
19. These 6 terms “refer to public pagan sins,” being “the pagan excesses that were connected with the practice of idolatry, the things commonly done at the celebrations in honor of the heathen gods” (Hiebert)
20. They are sins of impurity and drunkenness associated with open idolatry (Hiebert)

› Peter says, “Having pursued a course of...”

a. sensuality (aselgeia)

- i. This is also translated “debauchery” and “lasciviousness”
- ii. It describes those who engage in excesses of all kinds of evil (Hiebert)
 1. [Romans 13:13](#), “Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy.”
- iii. It is an excessive indulgence in sensual pleasure (MacArthur)
- iv. It involves a lack of personal self-restraint (Hiebert)
- v. The term pictures sin as an inordinate indulgence of appetites to the extent of violating a sense of public decency (Hiebert)
- vi. “The prominent idea is shameless conduct” (Vine)
- vii. The fact of moral impurity is clearly involved (Trench)

b. lusts (epithumia)

- i. This word is also translated “evil desires” (NET) and “passions” (ESV)
- ii. It is equally comprehensive and adds the inner vicious desires that drive to outward excesses” (Lenski)
- iii. These sinful passions are what “drive people into such indulgences” (MacArthur)
- iv. Jude said in [Jude 1:18](#), “...In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts.”
- v. So this refers to “strong irregular appetites, and desires of all kinds” (Clarke)

c. drunkenness (oinophlugia)

- i. This is also translated “excesses of wine”
- ii. The word is made up of two words, “wine” and “to bubble up or overflow” (Wuest)
- iii. This is “an insatiable appetite for wine”
- iv. It refers to “habitual intoxication” (MacArthur)
- v. Paul told the Ephesians in [Ephesians 5:18](#), “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit”
- vi. Drunkenness is prohibited in Scripture and demonstrates a lack of wisdom
 1. King Lemuel’s mother told him in [Proverbs 31:4-7](#), “4 It is not for kings, O Lemuel, It is not for kings to drink wine, Or for rulers to desire strong drink, 5 For they will drink and forget what is decreed, And pervert the rights of all the afflicted. 6 Give strong drink to him who is perishing, And wine to him whose life is bitter. 7 Let him drink and forget his poverty And remember his trouble no more.”

2. Some believe the reason Nadab and Abihu were executed by the Lord when they “offered strange fire before the Lord” in [Leviticus 10:1](#) was because of the mention of it by the Lord to Aaron in verses 8-9: “8 The Lord then spoke to Aaron, saying, 9 “Do not drink wine or strong drink, neither you nor your sons with you, when you come into the tent of meeting, so that you will not die—it is a perpetual statute throughout your generations—”
3. [Proverbs 20:1](#), “Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, And whoever is intoxicated by it is not wise.”
4. [Proverbs 23:29-35](#), “29 Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? 30 Those who linger long over wine, Those who go to taste mixed wine. 31 Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, When it goes down smoothly; 32 At the last it bites like a serpent And stings like a viper. 33 Your eyes will see strange things And your mind will utter perverse things. 34 And you will be like one who lies down in the middle of the sea, Or like one who lies down on the top of a mast. 35 “They struck me, but I did not become ill; They beat me, but I did not know it. When shall I awake? I will seek another drink.”

vii. Drunkenness is a sin that characterizes unbelievers

1. [1 Corinthians 6:9-10](#), “9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.”
2. [Galatians 5:19-21](#), “19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”
3. [1 Thessalonians 5:4-8](#), “4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; 5 for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; 6 so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. 7 For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. 8 But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.”
4. [Romans 13:13](#), “Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy.”

Harper’s Bible Dictionary (Drunkenness)

Drunkenness was persistently condemned (e.g., Gen. 9:20–27; Gal. 5:21). It rendered one insensible and imperceptive, a social nuisance, an economic ruin, and a moral

and spiritual reprobate. This it caused through its power to deceive, conveying a false sense of clear perception, intelligence, and power.

viii. This word, as Peter uses it, can also refer “to the effects of narcotic use” (MacArthur)

d. carousing (komos)

i. This refers to participating in wild parties or orgies (MacArthur)

ii. In one extrabiblical Greek source, the term described a band of drunken people that sang loudly and staggered wildly through the streets, causing a major public disturbance. (MacArthur)

e. drinking parties (potos)

i. This refers to “drinking parties or drinking bouts” (Grudem)

ii. This is where people were engaged for the sake of becoming drunk

f. abominable idolatries (athemitos)

i. This is used in broad sense to refer to something utterly inappropriate and repugnant to God (Ramsey)

ii. Kenneth Wuest says since the word translated “abominable” is used which means “contrary to law and justice, illicit, criminal,” and were forbidden by Roman law, they must have been pretty bad.

iii. Wayne Grudem says these “evil kinds of idol worship which involved or incited people to kinds of immorality [were] even forbidden by the laws of human governments. This suggests that sensual living is often connected with idol worship and the demonic forces behind those idols which incite people to yet great sin.”

iv. Paul Washer said, “Tell me what occupies your mind and I will tell you who your God is.”

21. Peter said this is the past when you carried out the desires of the Gentiles, having pursued this course of life.

22. That is not true now

23. All of us have something in our past that we wish we could undo but as Charles Spurgeon says:

You cannot undo anything that is done; your past life will always stand. If you are a believer in Jesus, the sin of your past life is forgiven. Still, it was your sin. The penalty of it will never be executed. Still, you did have that evil feeling, you did think that rebellious thought, you did say that wicked word, you did commit that transgression, you did omit the keeping of that precept. There it is, and it cannot be altered.

There is no man whom God has converted by His grace who wishes that he had spent more of his life in sin. No doubt it has given him a knowledge of the world, but it is a knowledge of

the world that those who have it would be glad to be rid of. (Charles Spurgeon, Spurgeon Commentary: 1 Peter)

24. Augustine spent the early years of his life following the pattern that Peter describes here. Then one day he was in a garden where children were playing a game that contained the refrain *tolle lege; tolle lege*, which means “pick up and read.” With those words ringing in his ears, he picked up the Bible and his eyes fell upon this passage: “Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts” ([Rom. 13:13–14](#)). At that moment, Augustine’s heart was stricken because he recognized himself in the text he was reading. He said in essence, “I have made every provision I could to fulfill the lusts of my flesh. I need to change my clothes. God grant that He would dress me in the clothes of Christ that I may no longer make provision for the lusts of the flesh.” (Quoted by R.C Sproul. 1 Peter)

· That’s the past, notice now

The Offense (v.4)

Peter says, “In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign you”

1. The idea of “surprised” (*xenizo*, pres.pass.ind.) means, “to be astonished”, “to be shocked” “with the idea of taking offense or being resentful” (MacArthur)
 - a. Sin was normal when they were unbelievers
 - b. They pursued a lifestyle of sin as mentioned in verse 3
 - i. Peter describes false teaches in this way in [2 Peter 2:14](#) as those “having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children;”
 - ii. Jesus even said in [John 8:34](#), “...Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.”
2. They resented the fact that the new believers no longer went with them “into the same excesses of dissipation”
 - a. “excesses (*anachysis*) pictures waters coming together and pouring out in excess or overflowing (MacArthur)
 - b. “dissipation” (*asotia*) is the state in which a person’s mind is so corrupt that he thinks about nothing but evil and how he might indulge his sinful passions (MacArthur)

› Because of this, Peter says...

3. “They malign you”

- a. “malign” (blasphemeo) literally means “to blaspheme, to slander or defame someone or to speak evil of them”
- b. We are told from ancient sources, both Christian and non-Christian, that it was Christians’ reluctance to participate in many conventionally accepted amusements and ungodly civic ceremonies, and their refusal to engage in idolatrous, immoral functions that caused unbelievers to hate and revile them. That led to unjust persecution and suffering for righteousness’ sake. (MacArthur)

· But Peter says they will give...

The Account (v.5)

He says, “But they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead”

Those who unjustly attack believers are amassing a debt to God that they will spend eternity paying back

1. God will hold them accountable
2. That’s what hell is---a life of payment for sin
3. Jesus paid that payment for sin but it doesn’t apply to those who reject Him
4. They are left to repay all for eternity in hell
5. It’s eternal because there is no payment outside of Christ that is acceptable to God
6. Peter says, “They will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead”
7. Who is the Judge “ready to judge the living and the dead?”
 - a. Paul said in [2 Timothy 4:1](#), “...Christ Jesus...is to judge the living and the dead...”
 - b. Peter said to Cornelius in [Acts 10:42](#) that God “ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead. Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.”
 - c. Jude said in [Jude 1:14-15](#), “14 It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, 15 to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.””
8. Both those living and those who already died will be judged by Jesus
 - a. Jesus said in [John 5:25-29](#), “25 “Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. 26 “For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; 27 and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of

Man. 28 “Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, 29 and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.”

- b. [2 Thessalonians 1:6-9](#), “6 For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, 8 dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,”

· This is why, in verse 6, Peter references...

The Gospel (v.6)

He says, “For the gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead, that though they are judged in the flesh as men, they may live in the spirit according to the will of God”

1. It is for this purpose the gospel was preached
2. What purpose? What does the gospel warn about? Coming judgment
3. [Wayne Grudem](#) says, “It was with respect to the final judgment (‘for this reason’, referring to v. 5) that the gospel was preached, and it will save them from final condemnation.
4. When John the Baptist was baptizing and the Pharisees and Sadducees came, he said in [Matthew 3:7-8](#), “7...You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 “Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance;”
5. The gospel warns sinners about the wrath to come and calls them to repentance
 - a. [Romans 5:9](#), “Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.”
 - b. [1 Thessalonians 1:9-10](#), “9 For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, 10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.”
6. Peter continues by saying the gospel has “been preached even to those who are dead”
 - a. This is referring to those who heard, believed and repented before they died
 - b. Their death was a result of persecution as they were “judged in the flesh as men” (that means they were physically put to death)
7. They are now “living in the spirit according to the will of God”
 - a. That means “they were triumphantly alive in the spirit” now

- b. Grudem says, “Since spirit is without the definite article in the Greek text, it could be translated “in the spiritual realm.”
- c. He further says, “We are assured here that believers who have died are none the less living and enjoying blessings in the unseen ‘spiritual’ and eternal realm, which is characterized by the Holy Spirit’s activity.”

CONCLUSION

1. So Peter’s readers were to “arm” themselves for suffering
2. They were to have the same “willingness” that Jesus had when He went to the cross
3. Therefore when they are persecuted they are also to recall the past remembering what their sin did to them and to Jesus
4. Even though they are “maligned” by those who are shocked and resentful toward them for them not doing what they continue to do, they will give an account for this sin
5. The same is true today
6. “The wages of sin is death” ([Rom.6:23](#))
7. Both physical and spiritual death
8. The gift of God is “eternal life”
9. It is only available to those who repent and believe in Christ
10. Have you repented and come to Christ?
11. Are you being persecuted for your faith in Jesus?
12. Are you having the same mind Jesus had when He suffered?
13. Examine your heart as we pray and prepare to remember our Savior in the Lord’s Supper
14. Let’s pray