

“7 ¶ But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. 8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. 9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging. 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. 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. 12 ¶ Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: 13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. 14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy *are ye*; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or *as* a thief, or *as* an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters. 16 Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. 17 For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if *it first begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God? 18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? 19 Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls *to him* in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.” (1Pe 4:7-19 AV)

Introduction. Some things need to be said.

“End” either means the end of the Jewish era with the destruction of the Temple, or the consummation of the ages beginning with the coming of the Lord Jesus and ending with His second coming. Throughout the New Testament, we are called to look and be ready for His Second Coming. I tend to think the second view is correct.

Sober, means to be in your right mind, not drunken with pride, ignorance, drugs, or alcohol, or excess of meat and drink and the pleasures

of the world. Get your head screwed on straight. Prayer means prayer. You need to pray. A lot. We are to be ready at all times for the coming of Christ and the judgment of the world. I want to look at this under three headings: I. As Good Stewards of the Oracles; II. As Partaking of Christ's Sufferings; III. With reference to the Ungodly and Sinners. And then I want to make some conclusions.

- I. As Good Stewards of the Oracles of God, or the Word of God.
 - A. We all have been made stewards of the Word of God, that it be not downgraded in the eyes of the world. We are called to holiness and virtue over and over again.
 - B. First of all, Love covers a multitude of sins. Jesus came to cover our sins. He atoned for them, took them away, cast them behind his back. I had a grade school teacher that gave us a good formula”: before you rip the cover off another's sins ask yourself these three questions: “Is it true? Is it necessary? Is it kind?”
 - C. Second: Use hospitality one to another without grudging.
 1. This begins in the church itself. The word means a “friend to strangers.” We are and ought to be a welcoming church. It means at least a handshake, a smile, and a “welcome, glad you could come.” Quit thinking about yourself, get out of yourself and smile. “Without grudging,” means open and honest without a secret debate going on. It shouldn't be forced, but natural.
 2. But it also means, depending upon your circumstances, that your home should be welcoming to others. Many people have been won to Christ or won to a church, by a friendly meal and good conversation. The people of God should be welcoming to strangers, is what Peter is saying.
 - D. Third, those who serve the church [minister] in any capacity, should serve according to his ability.
 1. If you seek the Lord and want to serve Him, you will find something to do that fits your gifts and your calling. Do it faithfully, whether you have an office or not, but especially if you have an office, as an example to the flock of God.

2. Giving requires a gift; not only the means but that harm is not done.
- E. Fourth: If you speak, do it without a double mind, without an if, and, or but. Speak with authority.
1. According to the ability you have. Do not go beyond your measure.
 2. All things are to be done for the glory of God through Jesus Christ.
- II. We should be sober and watch unto prayer as Partaking of Christ Sufferings:
- A. Do not think it strange that you need to go through trials. Trials are appointed for everyone of God’s people, without exception. “fiery” may be literal, or it may be figurative.
 - B. In these trials, we are simply carrying our cross, as Christ bore His. There is a fellowship of sufferings.
 - C. Jesus, Himself, said Matt. 5: “10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.
 - D. But there is no virtue in suffering as a criminal, but as a Christian: vs. 16.[written to Christians, not to Jews] Do not be ashamed.
- III. Be sober and watch unto prayer with respect to the ungodly.
- A. Judgment begins at the house of God. In the church.
 - B. What about those that do not know the Gospel.
 - C. If it takes discipline and trials to bring the justified home to glory; what hope have those who care not for God, the Gospel, the church, the Bible, the people of God?
 - D. We must give our souls up to God for His keeping, even considering sufferings as according to the will of God, and not allow suffering to cause us to depart from doing well.

Application.

1. Let us pray for one another. If we understand this, it will move us to diligence in prayer. Pray for you husband, your wife, your children. All have a rough road ahead of them.
2. Fortify our minds these this. Trials are not “strange.”
3. Be not quick to assign sins to those who are suffering. Christ came to hide our sins; not drag them out, as I said earlier.
4. Do not be ashamed of trials, if you have done no wrong. Do not be ashamed if you are disciplined, for it means that the Lord Jesus loves you very much.
5. Think of the awful condition of the ungodly and the fate that awaits them; be humbled; and rejoice in your own salvation