

April 22, 2018

1 Peter 4:7-19

Serious Service and Sanctified Suffering

An old man stood beside a curve in the road holding a sign that read, “The end is near.” Cars sped by, ignoring the warning sign. Some of the drivers yelled insults at the old man as they raced by.

Finally someone stopped to talk to the man. “Old man, why don’t you just go home? No one cares about your silly warning sign.”

“Really?” asked the old man. “Then perhaps I should change my sign to read, ‘Bridge out ahead.’”

Warning signs convey important information and communicate a sense of urgency. This week’s lesson begins with a warning and tells believers to adopt an attitude of urgency and seriousness.

1 Pet. 4:7 What is at hand?

Since time is running out and Jesus is coming back, how should Christians live? Verses 7-11 name six specific things Christians should do in light of the fact that the end is near.

Verse 7: “Be ye therefore _____ [level-headed], and watch unto _____.”

Verse 8: “And above all things have fervent _____ [love] among yourselves [within the church].” What will such love do?

Verse 9: “Use _____ one to another.” How should we do this?

Verse 10: What should we do with our spiritual gifts?

When you use your spiritual gifts in the church you are a good steward of God’s grace; when you are physically able to use your gifts but don’t you are a bad steward.

Verse 11: Christians should serve God out of the power and ability He puts within us. Who receives the glory when we serve in this way?

Both the end of your life and the end of the world are nearer than they have ever been. Because of this, Christians should be **level-headed**, **prayerful**, and **loving** toward one another. We should extend **hospitality** toward other believers, **use our spiritual gifts to minister** to one another, and **serve God out of His power**. All of this may be summarized as serious service for the Savior.

1 Pet. 4:12 “Beloved, think it not _____ concerning the fiery _____ which is to _____ you, as though some _____ thing happened unto you” (See also **2 Tim. 3:12**). What should we expect?

1 Pet. 4:13 Why should we rejoice when we experience trials? (There are two reasons given in this verse.)

1 Pet. 4:14 Why should we be happy when we are **reproached** (taunted, insulted) for the name of Christ?

The early disciples demonstrated this attitude (**Acts 5:41**). What does our proper response to suffering do for Jesus Christ?

1 Pet. 4:15 What are some evil deeds people can do that will bring suffering upon themselves?

1 Pet. 4:16 “Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be _____; but let him _____ God on this behalf.”

1 Pet. 4:17 Where must judgment begin?

The Lord wants His church to be pure and holy, so He will do whatever He must to cleanse the church of wickedness. Judgment and trials within the church are proof that God will one day judge the wicked, lost world. Their fate will be terrible!

1 Pet. 4:18 What does this verse indicate about the fate of the ungodly and the sinner?

1 Pet. 4:19 What should those who suffer for the Lord do?

Why can they have the confidence to do this?

Concluding Thoughts: Verses 7-11 are about **serious service**, and verses 13-19 describe **sanctified suffering**. Since the end is near (verse 7), Christians should be serious in their service. Time is running out, so we should approach our service for the Lord with a sense of urgency. We should also expect trials and be ready to suffer for the Lord Jesus Christ. We can trust the Lord to take care of us when we suffer. In fact, God will actually use our suffering to glorify Himself.

These are interesting truths, but do they relate to your life? Are you serious about your service for the Lord? Are you striving to grow in grace? Are you obeying the six instructions found in verses 7-11? If not, get started today. Talk to your Sunday School teacher about how you can put your spiritual gifts to work in your class. Don't delay, because time is running out.

Are you suffering in any way because you are a Christian? If so, how are you taking it? Does suffering surprise you? Are you complaining about it? Are you ashamed of it? Verses 12-19 tell you not to be surprised or ashamed, but to rejoice and glorify God. If you're not currently suffering, get ready – suffering will come.

Commit yourself to the Lord right now and follow His leadership in both service and suffering.

Project: Memorize **1 Peter 5:7**. Serve the Lord. Be loving and hospitable. Encourage someone who's suffering for the Lord.