



1 Peter 4:1-6 Living for God's Will

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Purpose: Abuse suffered for Christ's sake transforms our view of the world's way of life and strengthens our resolve to live according to God's will.

¹Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin. ²As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. ~ *1 Peter 4:1-2 (NIV)*

Context: Audience & purpose

(1) Understanding Suffering

- a. **Hope** – Suffering for righteousness is placed in context when Christians remember the resurrection and ascension of Jesus.
 - i. 1 Pt. 3:18-22 (**SLIDE**)
 1. The “therefore” in 4:1 points back to the resurrection that saves the Christian (past) and the current place of Christ – in heaven at God’s right hand (present/future).
 2. With Jesus’ death (3:18), resurrection (3:21), and ascension (3:22) still “ringing in their ears” Peter considers the suffering of Christ.
- b. **Jesus Suffered** – example of unjust treatment
 - i. V. 1 “**same attitude**” – In the ESV, “same way of thinking”; in the NASB, “with the same purpose”
 - ii. This mindset arms (equips) them to persevere in obedience, despite suffering injustice. In order to make sense of their circumstances the Christian must keep in mind the broad vision of God’s purposes in history and in the future.
 - iii. How does suffering in the body lead to being done with sin?
 1. Does not mean that once someone suffers unjustly that they never sin again. (Prov. 20:9, Jas. 3:2, 1 Jn. 1:8) **SLIDE**
 2. By choosing to suffer for doing good instead of living like the world the Christian places hope in God and trusts that living as one of His family members is worthwhile.
 3. This choice points out one’s allegiance. (fork in the road metaphor)

4. This way of thinking reveals the meaninglessness of living like the “pagans”.
(theme continued in v. 3)

c. **Living for the will of God** (also see 3:17)

i. What is God’s will? –

1. Personal/Corporate mindset & attitude– transformed ways of thinking
2. Personal /Corporate behavior- Christians live differently (family ways)
3. The purposes of God in past, present and future.

³ For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. ⁴ They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you. ⁵ But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. ~ *1 Peter 4:3-5 (NIV)*

(2) **Abused for Holy Living**

- a. The past way of life (how pagans live)
 - i. Nothing new – Katy Perry “*Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F.)*” (**2 SLIDES**)
 - ii. On campus and in the workplace
- b. Abuse for not following the crowd
 - i. Christians were alleged to be lawless and subversive because their “antisocial” behavior
 - ii. Nero accused the Christians of being “haters of humanity”
- c. Judgment for wild living and abuse

Debauchery – immoral and excessive indulgence

Orgies – feasts accompanied by wild immorality

Carousing – drunken parties

Detestable idolatry – idol worship which included actions deemed illegal by civil authorities.

Small Group Discussion Questions:

- How have you suffered abuse for Christ’s sake?
 - How should we respond to the abuse of those who do not understand our commitment to God’s will?
 - How might we help one another to avoid returning to wild, reckless living?
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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 human standards in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit.

~ I Peter 4:6 (NIV)

(3) **The Hope of Eternal Life** (v. 5)

a. A difficult text

i. Physical death of Christians

1. Though Christians have already died physically ('now dead') the gospel was preached (past tense) to them so that they might be saved at the final judgment and enter spiritual life.
2. This conveys a sense of hope for Christians who experience physical death before the return of Jesus.

ii. Spiritual death to life (spiritual regeneration int.)

1. The gospel is proclaimed to those who are spiritually dead (pagans) so that they might understand God's will, leave behind their old ways of living and live according to the God approved way of life.

iii. "For this reason"

1. Final judgment of the living and dead & the end of all things (vv. 5& 7)
2. The gospel is preached – either to lead to spiritual regeneration on earth while they can live for the will of God or for life after this life.

iv. Both convey a hope to different groups

1. We would not use this text to determine doctrine because of its ambiguity.
2. Neither interpretation goes against other scriptures on these topics.
3. Perhaps the spiritual regeneration interpretation offers a more compelling idea in context.

- b. Theme remains the same – Because of Jesus we are given new birth and must now live according to the family way of life – we are to look like our Father (doing God's will).

Small Group Prayer: If time allows