



I PETER 4:1-11

SUMMARY: It is clear that suffering is a central theme in the first letter of Peter. In this passage though, he links suffering because of Jesus to a life finished with sin. Not done in practice but done in desire (v.2).

He then points to their past, showing them the desires of their former lives. In doing this, he contrasts the desires of humanity to the will of God.

With a change of desires comes a change of lifestyle and so a follower of Jesus will be recognised as different. Not only will a Christian look different, they will likely be treated differently too, in this case slandered.

This slander of the church will not go unrecognised by God as they will have to give an account to one who will judge the living and the dead. This accounting is what awaits us all and it's because of this that the gospel had to be preached to both those alive now and those who have died. Even if someone has been slandered by the people and powers of this world, they are alive in the spirit through God.

It is because of the gospel, the good news of Jesus, that we can be ready for the 'end of all things' (v.7). We know we stand before God redeemed because Jesus is alive.

Because of this, we are called to action, we must be ready and clear minded, prayerful and loving. We are to express our salvation in the service of others, using all that we have been given to speak and serve on behalf of God himself. All of this so that God might be glorified through Jesus Christ his son.

THE CLOCK IS TICKING

1. What would your phone or diary say about how much time you waste on meaningless pursuits?
 2. Are there things in your life that you need to reprioritise? What might they be?
 3. How can we be done with sin because of suffering? (v.1)
 4. What does living for the will of God look like? (v.2)
 5. Can you look back on your life and see change in terms of how your life compares to God's expectations? (v.3)
 6. How are the behaviours listed in v.3 still seen in our present culture?
 7. How does the world react to those who prioritise the will of God over other desires? (v.4)
 8. Why is the gospel the great comfort when we consider that all the living and dead will be judged? (v.5-6)
 9. Why should we be alert and sober minded for prayer as we await the end of all things? (v7)
 10. What does love covers a multitude of sins mean? (v.8)
 11. Why is service and the use of our gifts so important to the life of a Christian? (v.9-10)
 12. Have you ever realised that when you speak and serve as a Christian you do it on behalf of God with his power and authority? How should that change us? (v.11)
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