

Epistle of First Peter XIII

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Let's come to 1-Peter 4 and let's just review a little bit in v 1 and then we'll get as far as we can in chapter four and hopefully, if we can finish it.

1-Peter 4:1: "Consequently, since Christ has suffered in the flesh for us, you also arm yourselves with the same mind; because the one who has suffered in *the flesh* has finished *living* in sin, to *this end*: ^(A)*that* he no longer live *his* remaining time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but ^(B)to the will of God. For the past time of our lives is sufficient to have done the desire of the Gentiles, *when* we ourselves were walking in licentiousness *and* lusts, *and were* debauched with wine, carousing, drinking and wanton idolatries. In *seeing* this *difference* in *your behavior*, they..." (vs 1-4)

Your former friends and associates "...are astonished *that* you are not carousing with *them* in the same overflowing debauchery, *and* they are slandering you. *But* they shall render an account to Him Who is ready to judge the living and the dead. And for this purpose the Gospel was preached to those who *have* died... [that is, those who were in the Church already and died.] ...so that, although in the flesh they may in fact have been judged according to men's *standards*, on the other hand, they might live according to God's *will* in the Spirit" (vs 4-6).

Now, let's go back and pick it up at verse two because we left off with verse one last time. I might mention: How many of you saw in the paper that they just recently found in one of the graves that they excavated in Israel, they found the remains of cannabis? Do you know what cannabis is? *Marijuana!* They found that they were using it in the failed birth of a baby of a girl who was probably fourteen years old and was too small to have the baby, and they found the bones and the baby bones right in there with her, too—and they found traces of cannabis.

When we see things like this: the debauchery, and carousing and things like this, as we have mentioned, what makes us think that drugs in this age is any new thing. Especially when you consider that the book of Ecclesiastes says, 'there's nothing new under the sun.' They probably had some of that going on there at the same time.

Let's come here to 1-Peter 4:2, and let's notice the structure of this from this point of view: **(A)**: There is something *not to do*; **(B)**: which is something *to do*, which is—one contrasts with the other; and Peter has done this all the way through. "To *this end*: *that* he no longer live *his* remaining

time in the flesh ^(A)to the lusts of men, ^(B)but to the will of God."

Let's go back and we will see the first part of Peter, chapter one and we will see that he did the same thing there. We find something almost similar to it, and I'm convinced the way that 1-Peter is written that it's a compilation of about three different letters that he had previously written, which he compiled.

1-Peter 1:14: "As obedient children, do not be conforming yourselves to your former lusts, *as* in *your former* ignorance. But according as He Who called you is Holy, you yourselves also be Holy in all your conduct. For it has been written, 'You be Holy, because I am Holy.' And if you are calling upon the Father, Who judges according to each man's work without respect of persons, be conducting the time of your *life's* journey in *the fear of God*" (vs 14-17). There we have almost the same thing repeated here in chapter four. It's quite interesting the way that has been done.

Let's come to chapter two and we will see something very similar to it. 1-Peter 2:11: "Beloved, I am exhorting you, as strangers and sojourners, to restrain yourselves from fleshly lusts, which are warring against the soul... [It's amazing, here we are living in the end-time, and what is one of the biggest problems that there is in the world? *All the lusts of the flesh!* So not only did it apply at that time, but it's also a prophecy for us today.] ...having your way of life honest among the Gentiles, that even though they are speaking against you as evildoers, *yet* through having witnessed your good works, they may glorify God in the day of visitation" (vs 11-12).

We find something very similar to this again, 1-Peter 3:16: "Having a good conscience, that, whereas they may speak against you as evildoers, those who are reviling your good way of life in Christ may be ashamed. For it is better, if it is the will of God, *for you* to suffer while doing good than *to suffer for* doing evil" (vs 16-17). I'll tell you what, there are a lot of people beginning to see and understand that. And unfortunately, we all have sort of been brainwashed somewhat with the Protestant religion, which is: everything is good, better and best and fine; and you shouldn't have a trial or anything because *God is in your hip-pocket* type of psychology.

So there we have the contrast. Now let's also see that this fits in another way. It says here, let's go back to 1-Peter 4:2—that we are to live "...according to the will of God." What's one of the first things we are to pray for? The model prayer (Mat. 6:9 [transcriber's correction]): 'Our Father, who are in

heaven, hallowed be Your name... Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.'

Let's look at an occurrence here in Luke, the first chapter, and let's ask: Does God answer prayer according to His will in His time? *Well, yes, we have the whole life of Abraham as an example of that.* But here in Luke, let's look at the account of Zacharias, John the Baptist's father.

Luke 1:11: "Then an angel of *the* Lord appeared to him, standing at *the* right side of the altar of incense. And when he saw *the* angel, Zacharias was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, 'Fear not, Zacharias, because your supplication has been heard; and your wife Elizabeth shall bear a son to you, and you shall call his name John. And he shall be a joy and exultation to you; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great before the Lord. And he shall never drink wine or strong drink in any form, but he shall be filled with *the* Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to *the* Lord their God. And he shall go before Him in *the* spirit and power of Elijah, to turn *the* hearts of the fathers to *the* children, and *the* disobedient to *the* wisdom of *the* righteous, to make ready a people prepared for *the* Lord.' Then Zacharias said to the angel, 'By what *means* shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife *is* advanced in years'" (vs 1-18).

If you read that statement, you really get the feeling that they had given up praying about it—right? Just think about it; all those of you who are old and past time. Are you still praying for children? This was probably a prayer offered many years ago. There's something also interesting: In asking the question, he showed his disbelief! So, he was told he was going to be dumb, couldn't speak until the child was born. I thought of that, especially in relationship to where it says in the book of Hebrews, that if the word of angels met swift retribution, what do you think is going to happen if we turn back the Word of God—I'm just paraphrasing there in the book of Hebrews.

I got to thinking about Lot's wife. Why did she turn to a pillar of salt? *Because she looked back!* We've always said she looked back because she was longing for the good things of Sodom—which is generally a true statement. However, why was she turned into a pillar of salt? *Because she disobeyed the command of an angel!* That's why! So, if an angel of God comes up and says for you to do something, you say, 'Yes, sir! Show me the way.'

That is interesting. If you're going to do the will of God there are two ways—aren't there? There's the way of the world—and Peter uses this to contrast it. The way of the world is called *the broad way*. What do they call the place in New York City

where they have all of these things of the world going on? They call it *Broadway!*—don't they?

Matthew 7:13: "Enter in through the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter through it.... [that's the way of the world, the broad way] ...for narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way that leads to life, and few are those who find it" (vs 13-14). It's very interesting the way that is. You will see the continuity of the writing of the apostles, that it follows right along with the basic things that you find in the Gospels.

Let's see something interesting that Jesus said—all having to do with the will of God, which shows you what is the most important thing in life anyway: *the will of God because He's Creator.* And I imagine that there were some people who were offended at this:

Mark 3:31: "Then *His* brothers... [His physical brothers, who were? *James and Simon and Jude.* Shows it over here in Mark 6, and then His sisters were there—yes, James, Joseph, Jude and Simon and are not His sisters here with us (Mark 6:3)] ...and His mother came and were standing outside; *and* they sent to Him, calling Him." Saying, 'Look, we're out here, can you come out and see us. Which also knocks in a 'cocked-hat' the whole theory that there were no other children to the virgin Mary.

Verse 32: "And the multitude sat around Him; and they said to Him, 'Behold [now listen], Your mother and Your brothers *are* outside; *and* they are seeking You.' But He answered them, saying, 'Who is My mother and *who are* My brothers?'" (vs 32-33).

- You know that Jesus did not break any of the commandments of God—did He?
- You know that He was not dishonoring His mother.

But that's quite an interesting statement—isn't it? 'Who is My mother? *or* My brethren?' Most of us would say, 'Oh yes, excuse me, my mother's here, I'll be back in just a few minutes'—right? We would do that—right?

Verse 34: "And He looked around at those who were sitting in a circle around Him, *and* said, 'Behold My mother and My brothers... [Just like that, He said, 'My mother and brethren.' That's an astonishing statement.] ...for whoever shall do the will of God, that one is My brother, and My sister, and mother'" (vs 32-35). That's a pretty powerful statement when you really think about it. In Christ's own dedication to the Father and the work that God gave Him to do.

Let's come over here to John, the fifth chapter, and here's one that we know very well, but

we'll just read it into the record to show how Jesus Christ lived His life. And the only way He could have lived it perfectly. This is a very basic Scripture and one that should be good for memorization for you.

John 5:30, Jesus said: "I have no power to do anything of Myself... [In other words He's saying 'Out from Me, from My very own self and being, My own human nature, I'm doing nothing.'] ...but as I hear, I judge..." Just put in your notes and study it: Luke 11:37; and it says in the *King James* 'lawyers'—but it's really *doctors of the law*. And if you want an interesting study, study what Jesus said every time He was invited to dinner with one of the Pharisees. And here He was so hard on them at this one that the 'doctors of the law' said 'You are insulting us.' And He went on to excoriate them even more.

"... I have no power to do anything of Myself; but as I hear, I judge... [these conversations He had with the Pharisees was God's judgment against them] ...and My judgment is just because I do not seek My own will... [So therefore, if we're going to follow in the footsteps of Christ, we have to do the *will of God*—not the will of man!] ...but the will of the Father, Who sent Me" (v 30). That's how Christ set the example for us.

Let's go clear to 1-John, the fifth chapter, and let's see how important this is in relationship to our prayers; how important this is in our relationship with God. We also know in John, the eighth chapter that Jesus said He 'always did the things that pleased the Father.' Not only did He do His will, but He did the things that pleased Him; which then gives us the example of what we ought to do. This gives us confidence; this helps us in every way if we really do that. It's not a matter that we alone set our mind—now we have to set our mind to do the will of God, that is true—but God's Spirit has to come and give us that desire to really do it, that's true.

1-John 5:14: "And this is the confidence that we have toward Him: that **if** we ask anything **according to His will**, He hears us." Maybe this is answer to why some prayers are not answered. It's not God's will, or it may not be His will at that particular time. Maybe like with Zacharias, the prayer that he and Elizabeth offered for children years ago, God finally said, 'Okay, I'm going to do it.' And the prayer took so long to be answered that Zacharias and his wife were so old, Zacharias said, 'How's this going to be?' ***We know that He hears us!***

So, lots of times God is going to answer prayers at the time that it is best for us in His way, in His will. Just because He doesn't answer immediately doesn't mean that He hasn't heard, that He's not going to answer. Remember Daniel? Daniel was fasting and

praying—praying his heart out! ***I mean he was praying his heart out!*** Twenty-one days later Gabriel came and said, 'Your prayer's been heard, but I've been with Michael over here fighting the prince of Persia, and I've been delayed, but your prayer's been heard.' So there he was all this time, poor Daniel, fasting and praying for 21-days and no answer. But the revelation that he got was when the Messiah was going to come (Dan. 9 & 10).

Verse 15: "And if **we know**... [that's a very positive statement; it's also conditional] ...that He hears us... [You can go back and look at some of those Psalms; a lot of them start out: 'Help, God'; 'hear, God'; and all of those things. How do we know God hears? If we're **doing** the things according to His will. **Asking** according to His will.] (and if we **know** that He hears us): ...whatever we may ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him." ***All contingent upon His will!***

I always remember the time we had this lady up in Salt Lake City who had breast cancer—just was right on death's bed. I know the prayer I prayed for her was 'God, if it's Your will to heal her, heal her; and if not, let her die quickly.' She was in terrible, terrible, terrible pain and suffering and agony, and God intervened and healed her. Tremendous!

But sometimes when you feel the most helpless, and when you know that you can't do anything, and you go to God and say, 'God, I just don't know, but let it be according to Your will'—that's really the best and most effective prayer. You can go back and read about the publican and the Pharisee, and the Pharisee was so wrapped up in his religion that he was praying to himself and not God. And he was comparing himself with others instead of comparing himself to the Word of God. And the publican came in and said: 'Oh God, I'm so miserable I'm not even going to lift my eyes up to heaven. Be merciful to me, a sinner.' Which one was justified? ***You know the story! The publican was justified!*** So there it is, we need to live our lives according to the will of God.

Now, let's come back to 1-Peter 4:3: "For the past time of our lives is sufficient to have done the desire of the Gentiles, *when* we ourselves were walking in licentiousness..." That's all kinds of immorality, sexual immorality; and it's also interesting that we're living now in an age that people God is calling are going to be those who have gone through an awful lot of trouble and difficulty. And the last thing they need to do is to come into a church of the Pharisees—which I'm going bring a sermon on *What Would a Church of the Pharisees Be Like*—based on a book by Joachim Jeremias (*Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*). Very interesting, and I think you will see that you were once in the

‘Church of the Pharisees.’ They need help, they need mercy; they have to repent though. But if they truly repent, then they need understanding. And they’re going to have the things come upon them because they:

“...and lusts, and were debauched with wine, carousing, drinking and wanton idolatries” (v 3). Can you imagine—what was it they had last week?—the final episode of *Cheers*, the tavern there. What are you going to do if that whole batch of people ever repented? Got a whole different story—right? *Yes, indeed!* Can you imagine the change in behavior for them, with their friends and everything, if they were converted?

Verse 4: “In *seeing* this *difference in your behavior*, they are astonished *that* you are not carousing with *them* in the same overflowing debauchery, *and* they are slandering you.... [talking against you] ...*But* they shall render an account to Him Who is ready to judge the living and the dead” (vs 4-5). We’re going to see here that God is judging us right now, as we get a little further into this chapter.

Verse 6: “And for this purpose the Gospel was preached to those who *have* died...” That has got to be referring to those whom God called, but have subsequently died. You’re not going to preach the Gospel to the dead. How effective are you going to be? Run out to a graveyard and preach the Gospel?

Oh, when we were down in Florida, we were driving along, and I tell you there is grass and green trees everywhere. Lot of pine trees over in Alabama. And almost every Church we came to—there are a lot of churches there—there was a graveyard next to it. I made the comment, I said, ‘Boy, that’d be depressing.’ Go to this church your whole life long and every year you get a little closer to the graveyard. I said it probably also gave a lot ‘hellfire and brimstone’ material for the minister, too. ‘You don’t shape up you’re going to be out there with the rest of those folks!’ But, just to make a point: How are you going to preach the Gospel to the dead? Run out there in the graveyard and shout to the tombstones? *No!*

This has to be to those who were alive but died in Christ. It couldn’t be anything other than that. “...so that, although in the flesh they may in fact have been judged according to men’s *standards*, on the other hand, they might live according to God’s *will* in the Spirit” (v 6). That is in their lives while they were living, and of course then, at the resurrection.

In our study we’ll go through all of the Scriptures which look like Christ was returning in the lifetime of the apostles. I might mention right

here that also in the whole area of Judea—and they’re beginning to see this now as they’re uncovering more and more things of the Dead Sea Scrolls. They are finding there are many writings about the end of the world, the end of the age, the coming of the Messiah—more than just Christians. So when it says there in the book of Acts, when Paul told Festus: ‘This (the whole thing of Jesus Christ) was not done in a corner.’

And you put that together where James said to Paul: ‘Now behold the thousands that believe!’ I don’t think we understand the cover-up in history that it has taken to blot out the name of Jesus Christ. And I don’t think we understand what a tremendous miracle it is that we have the New Testament. I don’t think we understand what a terrible and difficult time that a lot of the people in the true Church of God at that time had, because there were many, many professing groups who professed Christ at that time, but were not Christian; who were very Jewish. So, I think we’re in for a lot of surprises when we come to understand what was really going on at that time.

Peter’s saying, v 7: “Now the end of all things has drawn near.... [How many times have we gone through that? I remember in past years we were on the ‘gun lap’ how many different times. And we’ve gone past the ‘gun lap’ and around the track many times since then—right?] ...Therefore be serious-minded, and be watchful in prayers. But above all, have fervent love among yourselves, because love will cover a multitude of sins.” (vs 7-8).

Unfortunately, that is a misunderstanding by many people. They think that if you just kind of show a sanctimonious type of love, that people can get away with sins. *No!* It means that you have to have a loving, understanding attitude so that you can deal with people who have been in the circumstance of being drunk and debauched and have their lives pretty well shot. That love that you have toward them, and you help them have toward God, covers a multitude of sins. Not license to sin by any means! And we’ve seen that, too, haven’t we? *Yes, we have!* This doesn’t mean that now you cover up great and gross sins so they continue within the Church. Not at all! But it just shows that if you have that kind of attitude, you’re going to cover the multitude of sins, which then obviously have been repented of. So that ties right back in the first part of 1-Peter.

I’ll tell you one thing, brethren, it is sure true that the people that I have met recently are just absolutely starving for the Word of God and for the love of God and everything like that—it is amazing, absolutely amazing!

Romans 13:8: “Do not be indebted to anyone for anything, unless *it is* to love one another. For the

one who loves another has fulfilled *the* law.” We’re going to spend some time in that as we go along. You can have relationship of law. What was that song in *Fiddler on the Roof*? ‘Do you Love Me’—that’s it. So, his wife answered and said, ‘Well, look, I’ve done your laundry; I’ve baked your bread; I’ve reared your kids.’ And he said, ‘Yeah, but do you love me?’ And yes, you can have a relationship in law. But *love does not proceed from law. Law proceeds from love and law is an expression of love.* When you are truly loving someone, then you are fulfilling the law.

Then he says, here’s an example of that, v 9: “Because *it says*, ‘You shall not commit adultery. You shall not commit murder. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness. You shall not lust.’ And if *there be* any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, *even by this standard*: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ Love does not do any wrong to *its* neighbor; therefore, *love is* the full expression of *God’s* law” (vs 9-10).

But, *it flows from love!* It doesn’t flow from just law. For example, you can take every one of these commandments: *you shall not commit adultery*; but a person could have in his heart this kind of scenario: ‘Yeah, I know God says you shouldn’t commit adultery, and you know, that’s a tough law, God, but I’m going to keep it.’ Rather than: You’re going to love God so the thought of adultery will not even come into your mind. Vast difference in approach—right?

Just a thought: How many times have we heard it that we are suffering through this life so we will learn not to sin? Have you heard that? I’ve said it!—right? You’ve heard it, I preached it—right? Is that the whole object, that we learn not to sin? Or is it, more importantly, *we learn to love God?* You’re learning to love God and you’re building character. That’s what’s important. It’s not that you learn not to sin; even sinners know they’re not to sin. But they do! So, there’s a whole lot more to it. There’s just a whole lot more to it! And you can take each one of these commandments and go right on down the line and see exactly what you need to do to have the attitude of love to fulfill it.

Let’s go to Colossians, the third chapter. And I think just as much as we have heard fists pounding from the pulpit in the past, about keeping the commandments of God—which is true and we need to—but unless we really strive for this part of it, we’re going to miss an awful lot.

Colossians 3:12: “Put on then, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, deep inner affections, kindness, humility, meekness *and* long-suffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another if anyone has a complaint against another; even as

Christ forgave you, so also you *should forgive*. And above all these things *put on* love... [In other words, you have to grow into it. You have to put it on, and every time you lose your temper; every time I lose mine, I lose some of it and have to go back and try to rebuild it again—right? *Yes, indeed!* So it’s a whole lifelong project.] ...which is *the* bond of perfection” (vs 12-14).

Not only with one another, but with God! And how much closer are you to God because of that? Rather than just by commandment-keeping; because remember, the Pharisee said, ‘Lord, I thank you that I’m not like other men. I’m not an adulterer. I’m not an extortioner. And I’m not even like this old publican down here.’ His was one of law! Which you need, but law without love isn’t going to make it. Just like the song, *Do You Love Me?* ‘I’ve been married 25-years and all these things, done all that.’ What he wanted to know was, *do you love me?* It’s the same thing with God. That’s why we’re going through what we’re going through, brethren. There’s no other reason for it. So we can see how we need to do.

Let’s go to Philippians, the second chapter. And it’s interesting how Paul was able to write all these things concerning love. It’s interesting that he suffered so much. And I think when you suffer, you understand more about love.

(go to the next track)

Philippians 2:1: “Now then, if *there be* any encouragement in Christ... [After he’s gone through all what he’s gone through, and all the suffering, and all the preaching, and being in prison, and all this sort of thing]: ...if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of *the* Spirit, if any *deep* inner affections and compassions, fulfill my joy, that you be of the same mind, having the same love, being joined together in soul, minding the one thing. *Let* nothing *be* done through contention or vainglory... [and of course, that comes from pride—all that comes from pride!] ...but in humility, each esteeming the others above himself. Let each one look not *only* after his own things, but *let* each one also *consider* the things of others” (vs 1-4). There we have it, that ties right in with what Peter was talking about.

Let’s go back to 1-Peter 4:8: “But above all, have fervent love among yourselves, because love will cover a multitude of sins.... [Not only does it cover a multitude of sins, it avoids a lot of sins—doesn’t it? *Yes, it does!*] ...Be hospitable to one another, without complaining” (vs 8-9). We can also put ‘and those who receive hospitality, don’t take advantage of the one who’s giving it.’ Works both ways. Like everything else, there’re always two sides to the coin.

Verse 10: “*Let each one, according as he has received a gift from God...*” Each person has something in the way of a gift from God, which is called *grace!*—that you can give, regardless of how great, or regardless of how small, whatever it is. You have something to give to someone, whether it be time, whether it be help, whether it be understanding—and like in a Bible study, when you have a question you raise your hand and it’s answered, you have something that you’ve contributed to it. Or whatever it is that you may do to the degree that...

Let’s go to Romans 12, because that ties right in with what Paul was writing here, the whole thing. This was a very prevalent teaching in the New Testament Church. Too many times in the past it has been: well, the only ones who could do anything were those big, bad ministers; and those big bad deacons. And the way that you got ahead was play the political game and stroke the minister, and then you’re going to be ordained as a deacon or whatever. Now, that’s not the way that the Church originally was. Let’s read what Paul says here:

Romans 12:1-2 talks about the kind of mind and attitude that we have to have and it ends, the last part of v 2: “...and the perfect will of God. For I say through the grace that was given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of *himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think with sound-mindedness, as God has divided to each one a measure of faith. For even as we have many members in one body, but all members do not have the same function” (vs 2-4). Not an *office*. This whole thing: an office and a rank, we really don’t find that in the New Testament.

Verse 5: “Likewise, we, being many, are one body in Christ, and each one members of one another. But each one has different gifts according to the grace that is given to us—whether prophecy... [and that means speaking, by the way—that’s just speaking] ...*let us prophesy* according to the measure of faith; or service... [ministry—the source of that is where we get the word ‘*diakonos*’ or *deacon*—to be serving, to be helping.] ...*let us tend* to service; or the one who is teaching, *let him tend* to teaching; or the one who is encouraging, *let him tend* to encouragement...” (vs 5-8).

And there’re some people who are just able to be cheerful and encourage. There’re some people who can never see the good side of anything. There are other people who never see the bad side of anything—and they’re able to help and encourage and cheer up. And it seems as though that many times the one who is currently suffering the most is able to cheer up someone else who may be also suffering, but not as much. And we remember Esther Grisinger with that—right? She helped everyone in

her great suffering! So everyone has a gift or something they can do.

“...the one who is giving, *let it be* with generosity [simplicity, liberally—but on the other hand, the one who receives don’t take advantage either. You have both balances as we’re going through.] ...the one who is taking the lead, *let it be* with diligence; the one who is showing mercy, *let it be* with cheerfulness... [Too many times it’s, ‘Well, all right, I forgive you.’ That’s not cheerfulness!] ...**Let love be without [dissimulation] hypocrisy...**” (vs 8-9). There’re some people you love more than others, just by the way things fall. But, don’t put on a pretense of love to make yourself be known and seen. That’s what it’s talking about here. Let it be without dissimulation, without pretense.

“...abhorring that which is evil *and* cleaving to that which is good. *Be* kindly affectioned toward one another in brotherly love. *Let* each esteem the other more highly than himself” (vs 9-10). There we go, follows right along with what the Apostle Peter was writing here.

1-Peter 4:10: “*Let each one, according as he has received a gift from God, be using it* to serve the others, as good stewards of the grace of God, *which* manifests itself in various ways. **If anyone speaks, let it be as the words of God...** [In other words, the words which God would want you to speak. But let’s literally apply this to ministers. Too many of them are giving too many of their own ideas. If you’re going to speak, let it be the words of God.] ...if anyone serves, *let it be* as from the strength which God supplies; so that in everything, God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to Whom is the glory and the power into the ages of eternity. AMEN” (vs 10-11). This ends a particular section that Peter wrote.

Now again, we pick up with some of the difficulties and problems that people have with trials. There are several sections in 1-Peter where you go along and he mentions trials and it seems kind of like—if I could sort of coin a phrase here: ‘peat and repeat’—in the book of 1-Peter. Let’s look at a couple of these things and let’s understand something and then we’ll finish off chapter four and I think we can do it today.

Verse 12: “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial among you, *which is* taking place to test you, as if some strange thing were happening to you.” Living in such an evil world, the very nature of you keeping the commandments of God is going to put you in a bind at the very least! But Satan is out there; the world is out there; and we’re going to have the trials and difficulties come along, and there’s no way around it.

Verse 13: “But to the degree that you have a share in the sufferings of Christ, rejoice...” I will have to say, brethren, that I’m not ready to jump up and down and shout and laugh and yell with joy with every trial that I go through; because when they come they’re difficult. But I look back now at the things that we have gone through and see the various brethren now coming out of the circumstances they have been in, and the only thing I can do is be thankful and happy for what we’ve gone through **because we’re able to now help them**—which then becomes very important. “...so that, at the revelation of His glory, you also may rejoice exceedingly!” (v 13).

Now let’s look at just a couple of Scriptures here that we need to understand. With so many people building on the foundation of this man or that man, or whatever man, let’s go back and we’ll cover this quite sufficiently—not at this time only but also at times in the future.

Here’s something that I want us to understand. I heard a man give a sermon, and since we have quite a few people coming out of Worldwide, we can’t avoid it, and it’s current and it’s constant and it isn’t going to go away; and if we avoid it we’re not going to do proper duty; if we don’t face it squarely, we’re not going to be able to help those who are in trouble. But he gave a sermon—and he’s supposed to be a ‘high-ranking’ minister who just recently left—and he gave a sermon on loyalty. And he said, ‘Our first loyalty should be to God and His Word’—correct statement. Guess what he said the second loyalty should be to? *HWA!* Now I want to read something in the Bible here for all to hear!

1-Corinthians 3:10: “As a wise architect, according to the grace of God that was given to me, I have laid *the* foundation, and another is building upon *it*. But let each one take heed how he builds upon *it*. For **no one is able to lay any other foundation besides that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ**” (vs 10-11). I say to every minister who wants to build his ministry on the foundation of HWA, you’ve got another thought to think about! ***Jesus Christ is the only foundation.***

Now then, the rest of us all need to be careful how we build, v 12: “Now, if anyone builds upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones... [Which are all improved with trials—aren’t they?] ...wood, hay *or* stubble”—which are burned up with trials—aren’t they? *Yes!* So, you determine, *through Christ*, how these trials and difficulties—as Peter said, ‘fiery trials...no strange thing’; don’t be surprised! You be careful how you build.

Verse 13: “The work of each one shall be manifested; for the day *of trial* will declare *it*,

because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall prove what kind of work each one’s is. If the work that anyone has built endures, he shall receive a reward. If the work of anyone is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but *he* himself shall be saved, yet as through fire” (vs 13-15). So, there’s a purpose in everything that God gives us. I don’t love trials anymore than you, brethren. I would love to have it where it would be nice and easy and smooth and wonderful and just everything would be great. That’s not the way this life is. On the other hand, let’s not be stupid and go out and do things which create unwanted trials. They’re going to come.

1-Peter 4:14: “If you are being reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed... [Not by the world, not by the circumstances] (but): ...because the *Spirit* of glory and the Spirit of God is resting upon you; on their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. Assuredly, let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer, or as an over-lording busybody in other people’s lives” (vs 14-15). And that’s the way it is in the Greek. And how many have suffered from the over-lording busybodies in other people’s lives?

I saw a movie sometime back, where this man was what you would call a ‘dead-ringer’ for another criminal. And this fellow who was the criminal went out and he was holding up these little photo drive-in places, and raping the girls. And this other man was arrested, who was totally innocent but looked just like him, and had a tooth broken in exactly the same place that the real criminal had. And that poor man’s life was made absolutely miserable. The police came and arrested him and they really had—this was a good one because they had these real tough and nasty police—and it took him 13 months to find out. He went through about three trials and was acquitted.

But this man nearly lost his mind because of the difficulties that he was going through. So what happened, one of the detectives happened to get one of the girls who had been robbed and kidnapped and taken out to be raped, and they put her in the car and said, ‘Okay, take us along the route where you went’ and finally she remembered the route and they went up to the place where the *real* robber and rapist lived; and they found the robber/rapist’s brother there. And they took out a picture of the man that they had accused (who was innocent) and said, ‘Do you recognize this man?’ And he says, ‘He sure enough is a dead-ringer for my brother; and he’s got a tooth broken in the same place.’

So, they went and they finally arrested the guy who was really the robber and rapist/kidnapper; and here he had plastered on the wall of his apartment all of the newspaper clippings from all the difficulties and trials and arrests and acquittals that

this other man had gone through, and as they were arresting him and taking him out, the police then remembered why, when the innocent person was arrested, that all of the robberies and rapes stopped—for a period of 13 months. Because the real crook was in jail for something else and was there for the 13 months.

That was really just a strange and weird thing that that man went through. So when Peter is talking about here: ‘...let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer...’ in preparing for this sermon I thought about that. That poor guy, what he went through. Just ruined and destroyed his life. And it was based on a true thing, too.

Verse 16: “Yet if anyone is *suffering* as a Christian...” I want to make a point here: ‘Christian.’ Because there’s some people who say that the word ‘Christian’ does not even appear in the New Testament. And therefore, since it doesn’t appear in the New Testament we are not to be called ‘Christians.’ Well, I can tell you that right here, in the Greek it is: ‘Christian’—and also, in Acts 11, referring to the Church being raised up in Antioch where they were first called: ‘Christians.’

“...he should not be ashamed; but in this case, let him glorify God. For the time *has come* for judgment to begin with the household of God...” (vs 16-17). Brethren, that’s what’s going on in all the Churches of God everywhere today—everywhere—every Church of God is having upheavals and trials and difficulties; everywhere I go.

“...and if it first *begins* with us...” (v 17). What is the judgment? What is the trial for? What is it that God is interested in? ***Whether you love Him and obey Him! Whether you’re going to follow Him regardless, or whether you’re going to follow a man.*** That’s what it is.

“...what *will be* the end of those who are not obeying the Gospel of God?” (v 17).

Now let’s put that in perspective in relationship to those who claim to be God’s people. What if they are not obeying the Gospel of God?

Verse 18: “And if the righteous... [scarcely be saved (KJV)] ...are being saved with much difficulty, what will become of the ungodly and *the* sinner? For this reason also, let those who are suffering according to the will of God be committing their souls *to Him* in well doing, as to a faithful Creator” (vs 18-19).

That’s what Jesus did. Even to His very last dying breath. What was the last thing that Jesus said? ***“Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit.”***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter
✓ Exception: 1-Peter, from *The Seven General Epistles* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) 1 Peter 4:1-6, 2
- 2) 1 Peter 1:14-17
- 3) 1 Peter 2:11-12
- 4) 1 Peter 3:16-17
- 5) 1 Peter 4:2
- 6) Luke 1:11-18
- 7) Matthew 7:13-14
- 8) Mark 3:31-35
- 9) John 5:30
- 10) 1 John 5:14-15
- 11) 1 Peter 4:3-8
- 12) Romans 13:8-10
- 13) Colossians 3:12-14
- 14) Philippians 2:1-4
- 15) 1 Peter 4:8-10
- 16) Romans 12:2-11
- 17) 1 Peter 4:10-13
- 18) Romans 12:12-13
- 19) 1 Corinthians 3:10-15
- 20) 1 Peter 4:14-19

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 6:9
- Mark 6:3
- Luke 11:37
- Daniel 9; 10
- Romans 12:1
- Acts 11

Also referenced:

- Sermon: *What Would a Church of the Pharisees Be Like?* (Judaism vs Scripturalism Series)
- Book: *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* by Joachim Jeremias

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