

# ARMED AND SANCTIFIED

1 Peter 4:1-2

## INTRODUCTION

- When going from a well-light place into a darker place, it can be difficult to see much – but after some time your eyes adjust and you become accustomed to the darkness
- God’s design for his people is that they “shine as lights in the world” – a world that is utterly benighted by the darkness of sin
- Sadly, many who profess to be Christians have become “accustomed to the darkness” of this world, even as Lot became accustomed to the depravity of Sodom
- Today there is little apparent distinction between Christians and the world – in behaviour, in speech, in music, in their entertainment, in dress
- The easy path to take is the path of least resistance, to be led by the prevailing winds, to ride with the flow of the tide, to side with the majority
- But the Christian is called to go against wind and tide, to forsake the majority, and side with God’s chosen few (cf. Exodus 23:2)
- When the Lord Jesus counselled the people to repent and follow him, he left them in no doubt as to the life they must live if they were to be his disciples – a life of self-denial, of rejection by friends and family, a life of persecution by the world
- Essentially, they were to expect to be treated in the same way that Christ was treated (Luke 9:57-62)

- This is what ought to be preached from pulpits across the country, but instead the sheep are being fed motivational pep-talks, which leave them unprepared for the impending fiery trial
- As a faithful shepherd, Peter understood his duty feed the lambs and sheep of Christ's flock, preparing them to face fiery trial of persecution that was coming upon them, and they were already experiencing (1 Peter 4:12)
- And especially in these two verses we are studying today, do we have vital instructions for Christians in any situation, but especially under persecution
- Essentially, Peter exhorts believers to a sanctified, holy life (vv.1-3), while predicting the negative response of the world to such a life (vv.4-6)
- It is vital to understand the difference between justification and sanctification

<b>JUSTIFICATION</b>	<b>SANCTIFICATION</b>
By God's grace	By God's grace
Requires no human works	Requires our efforts
Declares us righteous	Makes us righteous
Imputes righteousness to us	Imparts righteousness to us
Positional	Practical
Judicial	Moral
Delivers from sin's guilt	Delivers from sin's power
Pardons from sin	Purifies from sin
Instantaneous	Life-long process
What Christ does for me	What Christ does in me

- Roman Catholicism confuses the two, applying the commands to strive and work for holiness as the means by which we are accepted with God
- In these verses, the apostle shows us the keys to living a holy life in the midst of a wicked and hostile world

# I. BE GIRDED WITH THE MIND OF CHRIST

## A. Christ suffered for us

1. “Forasmuch” connects to the previous verses which set forth Christ’s example of suffering and death, as well as his final victory and glorification
2. Note that “for us” is omitted in most modern versions
3. Christ’s atonement for us is repeated throughout the epistle (2:21; 3:18)

## B. Christ suffered in the flesh

1. The word “flesh” (*sarki*) is used three times in these two verses and can convey different meanings
  - a. The physical, earthly body, mortal, subject to the effects of the curse
  - b. Man’s fallen, sinful nature, in contrast to “the spirit”
2. In regards to Christ, he had no sinful nature of flesh like us
3. But he did become Man – “the word was made flesh” (John 1:14), by taking to himself “a true body and a reasonable soul”
4. This body, like ours, was subject to weakness, tiredness, hunger, thirst, and “common infirmities” that we suffer
5. Unlike ours, however, his body was untainted by the sin which we inherit from Adam, it was an entirely holy body (Luke 1:35), prepared by the Father (Hebrews 10:5), which would see no corruption in life or death (Psalm 16:10)

6. He was as much like us in his humanity as was possible, yet without sin
7. Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh (Romans 8:1-4)

C. The Christian must be armed with Christ's same mind

1. Note that this is an imperative (command) to be obeyed
2. "Arm" (*hoplizomai*) is "to equip with arms" and is a reminder that the Christian is engaged in a spiritual war, fighting powerful enemies
3. This exhortation shows the key to true holiness and sanctification – its root is not mere outward affliction or asceticism, but stems from a sanctified *mind*
4. It also shows us that the life God calls us to live is governed by a sanctified mind, guided by rational thinking, based upon absolute truth – not as many in our present day live, governed by feelings and emotions
5. Just as Paul in Ephesians 6:10-18 calls us to take on the spiritual armour of God in order to stand against the devil and to guard against sin, so Peter calls us to take to us the spiritual armour of the mind of Jesus Christ
6. What did Christ have in mind in his suffering?
  - a. Doing the will of the Father (Luke 22:42)
  - b. Leaving us an example (1 Peter 2:21)
7. But what Peter is concerned with here is Christ's intention to deliver us from sin, both its penalty and power (Titus 2:14)
8. Christ's mind in his suffering was destroy sin in us

9. Therefore, I am to arm my mind with the resolve to have sin destroyed in my own life
10. The word rendered “mind” (*ennoia*) is rendered “intent” in Hebrews 4:12 and has the force of fixed resolution

## II. BE GUTTED OF YOUR SINFUL FLESH

- A. The last part of v.1 has been variously understood
  1. Some see the “he that suffered” as being Christ
    - a. He “ceased from sin” by atoning for our sins on the cross
    - b. The Christian is to have the same mind towards sin by dying to it
  2. Another view is that it refers to external persecution, and that by such suffering we are sanctified and freed from sin
    - a. Yet many people experience suffering and are none the better for it, but rather become worse
    - b. Roman Catholics have used this verse to support “purgatory” – the idea that suffering purifies from sin
  3. A third view is that the “flesh” here is not the Christian’s body, but rather the sinful nature
- B. The flesh must be mortified
  1. As the first part of the verse describes Christ’s death on account of sin, so the last part of the verse describes the Christian’s death to sin

2. The “suffering in the flesh” here is no less than the mortification of the sinful nature
3. The crucifixion of Christ becomes the pattern for my own life – my flesh must be crucified (Galatians 5:24)
4. This corresponds to Paul’s teaching in Romans 6:6-13, where “our old man is crucified with him”
5. But this death is not easy – it is suffering, it is painful, it is lingering – the flesh is a cherished part of our being, and moreover the flesh does not go to the cross willingly, but rather fights us all the way
6. Hence, it requires a mind armed with the mind of Christ, and enabled by the power of Christ

### **III. BE GUIDED BY THE WILL OF GOD**

#### **A. Our time in the flesh**

1. “Flesh” here is not the sinful nature, but this natural life in this present state (Galatians 2:20; Philippians 1:22)
2. The redemption of the body (glorification) is future (Romans 8:23; Philippians 3:21; 2 Corinthians 4:16)
3. It reminds us of a fact that we are too often oblivious to – that these mortal lives in the flesh are brief and will soon come to an end, upon which we must stand before God in judgment
4. While we live, the door of opportunity to live either for Christ or for the flesh is open, but will soon be closed, never to be opened again
5. “Only one life, ’twill soon be past, only what’s done for Christ will last”

## B. Many live to the lusts of men

1. Unregenerate men, in their spiritual deadness and blindness can do nothing but slavishly obey the lusts of the flesh they are in bondage to (Ephesians 2:1-3)
2. Having rejected God and the light he has given them, God responds by giving “them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts” (Romans 1:24)
3. Only God’s grace can deliver such enslaved sinners from their bondage into a state of forgiveness and liberty through Christ

## C. Few live to the will of God

1. The believer lives in a new and different way to the world – he lives according to the will of God
2. Just as Christ came to do his Father’s will (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 8:29), so those who belong to Christ also live to do the Father’s will
3. To do God’s will requires dying to self-will (Romans 12:1-2)
4. This will of God is sometimes called his *preceptive* will, that is his law and commands as revealed in Scripture
5. His commandments are not grievous (1 John 5:3), but rather are a delight (Psalm 119:24,35,47,70,77,92,143,174)
6. Those who are Christ’s have a duty to learn, know and discern God’s will, then to do it

## CONCLUSION

1. Before we can hope to mortify sin, we must first have our sins forgiven and pardoned through the blood of Jesus Christ
2. Have you come to him in humble repentance, trusting in his atonement solely for your justification, crying out, “God be merciful to me a sinner”?
3. The apostle Paul desired to know “the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death” (Philippians 3:10)
4. We fellowship in Christ’s sufferings and conform to his death by undergoing death ourselves – death to sin, self, the world and the flesh
5. Am I seeking to mortify sin in fellowship with Christ?
6. Can I truly say, “I hate sin”, and not merely say it, but in my heart loathe it and long to be rid of it?
7. Are you willing to give up things dear and cherished to you in your striving against sin? (Matthew 5:29-30)
8. What is the guiding principle of your life? Is it what your flesh dictates to you? Or is it the will of God?