

FBC POWELL, 7-7-19 AM
"The Rest of Your Life"
1 Peter 4:7-11
16 in Series, "Standing Firm in the True Grace of God"

1 Peter 4:2b (NASB) "So as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God."

2 Corinthians 5:10 (NASB) "For we [true Christians] must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, **so that** each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."

Bema—A raised platform at the Corinthian games (much like today's Olympics) where reward was given or withheld.

"We can be drunk with private concerns and be indifferent to the great enterprise of world evangelization, but God will simply pass over us and do His great work while we shrivel up in our little land of comfort."
—John Piper

I. The Reason for the Urgency (v. 7a)

"**imminent**" —Could happen at any time.

The Lord has so planned things so that every generation of Christians should live with a sense of expectancy, urgency, and anticipation that leads to preparation.

Hebrews 10:25 (NASB) "Not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing **near**."

Revelation 1:3 (NASB) "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is **near**."

Philippians 4:5b (NASB) "The Lord is **near**."

James 5:8 (NASB) "You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is **near**."

*Troubles will soon be o'er, happy forevermore,
When we meet on that shore, free from all care.
Rising up in the sky, telling this world goodbye,
Homeward we then shall fly, glory to share.*

The chorus went like this:

*Jesus is coming soon, morning, or night, or noon.
Many will meet their doom, trumpets will sound.
All of the dead shall rise; righteous meet in the skies.
Going where no one dies, heavenward bound.*

—R. E. Winsett

- II. Our Response to the Urgency (vv. 7b-11)
 - A. We Respond With Urgent Prayer (v. 7b)
 - B. We Respond With Sacrificial Love (vv. 8-9)

John 13:34-35 (NASB) ³⁴ “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

“Fervent’ denotes stretching or straining and pictures a person running with taut muscles, exerting maximum effort... Earlier in this letter (1:22), Peter also used its related adverb to describe the intensity and exertion that ought to characterize Christian love. Such love is sacrificial, not sentimental, and requires a stretching of believers’ every spiritual muscle to love in spite of insult, injury, and misunderstanding from others.” —John MacArthur

Romans 5:5b (NASB) “...the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

Love seeks deliverance from sin, not the condoning of sin.

1 Peter 4:7a (NASB) “The end of all things is near.”

- C. We Respond by Using Our Spiritual Gifts (vv. 10-11)

Romans 12:6-8 (NASB) ⁶ “Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *each of us is to exercise them accordingly*: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; ⁷ if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸ or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”

1 Peter 4:11b (NASB) “Whoever speaks, *is to do so* as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves *is to do so* as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; **so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever.** Amen.”

Sermon 16: The Rest of Your Life

1 Peter 4:7-11

Notice a phrase in 1 Peter 4:2 that was mentioned in the last message: “so as to live *the rest of the time* in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.” That phrase, “the rest of the time” is worth meditating on. Let me ask you a question that I really want you to think about. How are you going to spend *the rest of your life* here on this earth? The average life span in the USA is now about eighty years. If the Lord allows you to live that average amount of time, what do you want to see accomplished? I’m not talking about a “bucket list” involving things like bungee jumping off a high bridge, parachuting from an airplane, or going on a safari. I’m

referring to things that really count for eternity. What do you want to see happening in your life between now and the grave?

In light of the temporary nature of your life here, are you focused, zeroed in on eternity? Do you understand that Christians are going to have to stand one day at a place called, “The Judgment Seat of Christ”? The reason we will stand there is not to determine if we go to Heaven or Hell. Only those going to Heaven will be there. Listen to *why* Christians will be there. 2 Corinthians 5:10: “For *we* [true Christians] must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” The words “judgment seat” translate a single word in the Greek – *Bema*. It was a raised platform at the Corinthian games (much like today’s Olympics) where reward was given or withheld. It is interesting that the word “good” in 2 Corinthians 5:10 means profitable or useful. The word translated “bad” in this context means the opposite – “unprofitable”, “not useful”, or “a wasted life”.

In light of these truths, what are you going to do with the “rest of your life?” My prayer is that for many here today, this will be a turning point, a re-direction of the course of your life that says “no” to a wasted life, a life given to that which is frivolous, considering eternity. I don’t want you to have a wasted life, to have regret at the *Bema*, the Judgment Seat of Christ. I so desire that you to stop being afraid, cautious and timid when it comes to walking with God. I long for you to be bold and trusting in honoring God when it comes to your daily walk with Him.

I love this quote by John Piper in his book, *Brothers We Are Not Professionals* (page 190). “We can be drunk with private concerns and be indifferent to the great enterprise of world evangelization, but God will simply pass over us and do His great work while we shrivel up in our little land of comfort.” I’m going to make this personal: are you spiritually “shriveling up in your little land of comfort”? If you are, I believe that our Lord has made a divine appointment for you to be here right now so that there can be changes that you can make *today* that will affect you through all eternity. There is an urgency here that we must respond to. Today can be the day you look back on in eternity as the day when things changed as you pondered “The Rest of Your Life”.

I. The Reason for the Urgency (v. 7a)

Whatever your age, the rest of your life here on this earth will not involve a lot of time when compared to eternity. The Greek word translated “end” in verse 7 doesn’t necessarily refer to a stoppage or a chronological end. It speaks of a fulfillment, a promised goal that is achieved. As we go through this text, it will become clear that Peter is referring to *the return of Christ*, or as it is often called, “the second coming of Christ”.

The word translated “is near” could better be translated “at hand” as it in other translations. Perhaps the best translation is “The end of all things is imminent.” That word “*imminent*” simply means, “could happen at any time”. That means that from our standpoint we are to be ready because Jesus could return very soon. Someone might say, “Peter sure was wrong about the second coming. Close to 2,000 years have passed and Jesus hasn’t returned.” No, Peter wasn’t wrong. The Lord has so planned things so that every generation of Christians *would* or at least *should* live with a sense of expectancy, urgency, and anticipation that leads to preparation. That is why I have a problem with any view of the Second coming of Christ that says, “Jesus cannot now come for His bride, the church.”

Let me show you what this expectancy should look like. Believers are told in Hebrews 10:25: “not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see *the day* drawing near.” What “day” is the writer of Hebrews referring to? It is the day of Christ’s return for His Bride; the true church. That Hebrews passage is not the only passage teaching that sense of urgency.

Revelation 1:3: “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for *the time is near*.”

Philippians 4:5b: “The Lord is *near*.”

James 5:8: “You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is *near*.”

Are you beginning to see that our generation is out of balance on this? In the 1970’s and somewhat in the 1980’s the return of Christ was on many if not most Christians’ minds. So many of the popular “contemporary” songs in those days were about the second coming of Christ.

Even the “country gospel” artists were all about the coming of Christ. Many older folks will remember this song by R. E. Winsett written in the 1940’s but became more popular later and was recorded by (among others) *The Oakridge Boys* in 1970’s. It was rather shallow, but at least it emphasized the imminence of Christ’s return. Here is the chorus of that song *Jesus Is Coming Soon*.

*Jesus is coming soon, morning or night or noon
Many will meet their doom, trumpets will sound
All of the dead shall rise, righteous meet in the skies
Going where no one dies, heavenward bound.
— R. E. Winsett*

Peter emphasizes that the imminence of Christ’s return should impact the way we live and walk today. Is that true of you?

II. Our Response to the Urgency (vv. 7b-11)

Notice the “therefore” in verse 7. That word connects the doctrine to the practice. Let’s examine how we respond to the urgency that “the end of all things is near” so that it is manifested in a world that seldom even thinks about the return of Christ.

A. We Respond with Urgent Prayer (v. 7b)

I want to emphasize again the horrible neglect of the church today concerning the return of our Lord. Though I haven’t personally counted, one Bible scholar I trust (John MacArthur) says that twenty-five percent of the New Testament deals with the Second Coming of Christ. When the two truths of the lostness of the world and the imminence of Christ’s return begins to sink in, there should be a deep burden and urgency focused on those without Christ whether they are in our family, our neighborhood, or on the mission field. Certainly our response ought to be sharing the Gospel with those who are not ready for His coming. But the fact is that God most often prepares the spiritual soil for the hearing and responding to the Gospel through prayer. It is prayer that prepares the soil for the planting of Gospel seeds. Watch carefully. When we get a sense of the imminence (something that could happen very soon) of Christ’s return, there ought to be a deep burden to pray for the lost to come to Christ before it is too late. It is prayer that prepares the way for the spread of the Gospel.

Peter did not just tell these Christians to pray, he gives them two important things they must deal with to be powerful in their prayer. First, he says, “be of sound judgment,” The word translated “sound judgment” literally means “be in one’s right mind”. The ESV says “be self-controlled and sober minded for the sake of your prayers.” Peter is saying that our prayers don’t have to be filled with unbridled emotion, but they must be filled with sound judgment, and a sober spirit.

B. We Respond with Sacrificial Love (vv. 8-9)

It is love that Jesus said is the badge of a believer. John 13:34-35: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

The word “fervent” in verse 8 is a word picture of an athlete straining to reach the goal. It involves eagerness and intensity. Listen to this great quote:

“Fervent” denotes stretching or straining and pictures a person running with taut muscles, exerting maximum effort... Earlier in this letter (1:22), Peter also used its related adverb to describe the intensity and exertion that ought to characterize Christian love. Such love is sacrificial, not sentimental, and requires a stretching of believers’ every spiritual muscle to love in spite of insult, injury, and misunderstanding from others.

[John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1 Peter*, page 241]

This love is not an emotion we must “work up” (though it may be accompanied by great emotion); this love is the love of God flowing through us. Romans 5:5b: “... the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” I want *the rest of my life* to be characterized by this fervent love that only God can give us for those who do not know Him and will be eternally lost if they die or if Christ should return.

Look at the further description of this supernatural, sacrificial fervent love. This love covers a multitude of sin (v. 8). Peter does not say that love condones sin or does not confront sin. Peter is saying that love shares the way out of sin’s bondage. This example that Peter gives us is so important in this day when sin is having increasing gains that are unprecedented in our nation in our times. In addition, our culture and many politicians are stumbling over one another to show how “understanding” they are by condoning sin. *Love seeks deliverance from sin not the condoning of sin.*

In verse 9, we see that love cares. The word “hospitable” means “loving strangers”. We are to sacrificially love with hospitality those who are caught in the grip of sin whether they be down and out or up and out; whether they live in a penthouse or a cardboard box under a bridge. I am not bragging, but that has been a description of our church, but in recent days, I fear that we have gotten so distracted (by real problems) that we have lost our focus. There is still a lot of this kind of love for the hurting and the lost. Our Mobile Home Park ministry is still ministering love to the hurting, and we are seeing a resurgence in interest in missions as we have commissioned and heard reports from teams in unreached areas of our own nation and in other countries.

As your pastor, I want to give you a caution (this is not a rebuke). We are to be all about people – hurting people, people who are not clearly hearing the Gospel presented. That is why we exist as a church! Please don’t misunderstand me; I know that we have lots of work to do on the facilities – carpet is worn out, more space is needed in the parking lot for handicapped spots

and senior adults, and the Academy has so many needs. I am all for people giving sacrificially and donating their time to see all these things accomplished.

Last Sunday at the Members Meeting we gave you information concerning the area of the athletic fields where we are proposing building a pavilion to enable us to do more with FBA and Strive Sports through which we are reaching so many young families. I want to go on record that I am 100% in favor of the pavilion presented at the Members Meeting last Sunday. This is going to be financed through gifts outside the church budget by philanthropists in the community and many FBA families that attend other churches. Kathy and I will be praying about what He wants us personally to give. But don't forget and don't separate this from the fact that we are called by God to reach the unreached, the and the hurting and as 1 Peter 4:8-9 says, "Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaint."

We have looked at the reason for our urgency – 1 Peter 4:7a: "The end of all things is near." We have focused on our response to the urgency – We respond with prayer and with sacrificial love. That brings us to the third response to the urgency.

C. We Respond by Using Our Spiritual Gifts (vv. 10-11)

The moment you are saved, you are given a spiritual gift. There are no exceptions. I have preached series of messages on spiritual gifts, but here, I simply want to introduce them. At salvation God gives you a spiritual gift. Spiritual gifts are not talents. Many times the gifts flow through a talent, but they are not the same. Lost people have talents, but only Christians have spiritual gifts. A Spiritual gift is a special desire for and enabling to every Christian to equip them to minister to the body of Christ.

These gifts manifest themselves in many ways, but primarily through a burden that focuses the believer on needs in the body of Christ. A gift is a special enabling and burden to focus on areas of need in the body to minister to one another. There are multiple instructions given in the New Testament as to how they are to be ministered. I believe (opinion) that the basic gifts are found in Romans 12:6-8: "Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *each of us is to exercise them accordingly*: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness." I have preached whole series on these, but that depth is not my purpose here.

Learn this, when you get busy in the ministries of the church, your gifts will be manifested by what excites you, motivates you, and what you are effective in as you minister in the power of the Holy Spirit. Verse 10 tells us to *employ our gift*. Get involved! If it doesn't motivate you and you are not effective, it is not the ministry you should be in.

It seems, in verse 11 that there are two categories of spiritual gifts – speaking gifts and serving gifts. Examples of speaking gifts are teaching, exhortation, prophesy, and leading. Serving gifts would be service, mercy, and giving. That doesn't rule out speaking or serving in any of the gifts; it is simply that some focus on speaking and others focus on serving. We are all to speak the Lords truth and we are all to serve the Lord by serving His people. We are speaking here of the focus of our ministry.

In verse 11, one of the points is that spiritual gifts are not talents. Lost people have talents. Only Christians have spiritual gifts. Someone may have a talent for teaching – engineering, but

that is not necessarily a spiritual gift. When I went to UT, some of the best teachers (as far as clarity, motivation, and knowing their topics) certainly were not Christians – some likely would consider themselves to be agnostics or atheists. Spiritual gifts are given by God to believers at salvation. God may choose to give a gift that operates through a natural talent, but the gift and the talent are two separate things.

Notice that the clear purpose is spelled out in 1 Peter 4:11b: “Whoever speaks, *is to do so* as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves *is to do so* as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; *so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*”

Conclusion

I pray that you recognize the urgency here. Stop putting things off! Jump into kingdom work with both feet and pour yourself out to the Lord and His work. Begin sharing the Gospel with those that God has opened a door for you to go through. Prioritize prayer – urgent prayer; love the lost and put your spiritual gift to use. The time is short. How are you going to “live the rest of the time?”

NASB (New American Standard Bible)

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