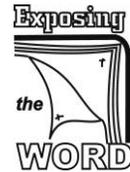


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The Epistles of 1 & 2 Peter

BY DR. EDGAR PIERCE



VIII- Remember to be Strange: 1Pe 4:1-6

During World War II a 15-year-old boy managed to enlist in the Navy and eventually joined the crew of a destroyer escort in the North Atlantic. After the ship left port, he gave himself away by being so frightened and homesick.

Even though the safety of the ship was at stake, the youth had to stand his watch. The bo's'n assigned to him the midnight to 4 a.m. watch on the bow. A lanky cowboy from Texas named Cogswell had the preceding duty at the dangerous and important post.

Fearing the worst, the captain stayed on the bridge during the "graveyard watch." About 1 a.m. he looked out through the starlit night to see how the novice sailor was faring. To his amazement, he recognized the tall frame of Cogswell.

The next morning, the skipper asked the bo's'n, "Did you know Cogswell took the kid's place last night and stood eight hours straight duty?"

"Yes sir, I did," he replied. "Well," replied the captain, "what do you think about it?" "Sir, I didn't think anything about it. Didn't you know? Cogswell's a Christian!"

Have you ever been around someone who was simply different? No I am not talking about being weird but different. That is different in a good way, a godly way. We all are guilty of what I would like to refer to as a quiet conformity. We think it is strange when someone wears their hair a little long or has an ear ring or tattoo. There is a pressure on us in society to quietly conform to the image of normal. I think that Peter is going to remind us that if normal is just being a nominal Christian without any fire or passion for the things of God we are to be different. He says in *1Pet 4:4* that we should live our lives in such a way that **“they think it strange that ye run not with them.”** Would you not say we need more strange Christians?

I- Challenge to Arm Ourselves:

First, the challenge from Peter is to arm ourselves. He uses the example of Christ suffering to motivate us.

1Pe 4:1 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, **arm yourselves** likewise with the

same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

We are to arm ourselves with the same mind related to suffering that Christ had. *Barnes Notes* says, “We are to put on the same fortitude which the Lord Jesus had, and this will be the best defense against our foes, and the best security of victory.”

This idea of arming ourselves or putting on the armor is not new. Paul used this thought several times. Notice a few.

Rom 13:12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

2Co 6:7 By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

Eph 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

Parable of the Deadly Wound

Have you heard the story about Satan's attack upon a certain Christian? First, he shot a poisonous dart at his heel, but the Christian was unharmed because he had his feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Satan's next attempt was at his loins, but the Christian repelled this because he had his loins girt about with the truth. Unsuccessfully the devil tried a shot at his breast, the breastplate of righteousness. The Christian knocked away another arrow. But the devil, still not discouraged, slipped around behind the Christian and shot him in the pocketbook, and killed him dead as a hammer.

Simply we need to arm our spiritual lives.

II- Live to Will of God:

1Pe 4:2 That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

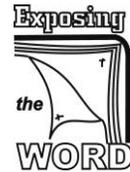
We often asks what is our purpose in being here as humans. Peter challenges us to not live like the rest of the world fulfilling our fleshly desire the rest of our time upon this planet.

The life of a Christian can be described in one of four ways: as a journey, as a battle, as a pilgrimage, and

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as a race. Select your own metaphor, but the necessity to finish is always the same. For if life is a journey, it must be completed. If life is a battle, it must be finished. If life is a pilgrimage, it must be concluded. And if it is a race, it must be won.

Paul said in **Php 3:13-14** **Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.**

God called Abraham to separate from his kinsmen and come near to Him. This is quoted from the Old Testament in **2Co 6:17** **Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.**

There is no doubt that God has called us to be different from the world. We are called to live up to God's will and not our will.

III- The Former Us:

One of the things I always want to remember is how I was before I was saved. Not so I can beat myself up for being such a scoundrel but so that I can always remember what a scoundrel God saved.

1Pe 4:3 **For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:**

Paul says in **1Co 6:9-10** **Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.**

Now these two passages together give us a great picture of what we were. Paul next says, **1Co 6:11** **And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.**

There is not a man alive that has not lied, nor took something, no matter how small, that did not belong to them. There is not a man alive that has not had some thoughts that would not be acceptable to a holy and righteous God. This makes us all liars, thieves and

sinners. The Bible say, **“There is none righteous, no not one.”** And such were some of us...all of us.

IV- Be Strange:

1Pe 4:4 **Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot...**

I read a small item that asks how is a Christian different.

How Is the Christian Different?

*The Christian sees through kinder eyes-like Jesus.
He gives from a bigger heart-like God.
He speaks with a purer tongue-like Christ.
He serves with more willing hands-like Jesus.
He walks with a greater faith-like his Lord.
He loves with agape love-like the Father in heaven.
He thinks with a spiritual mind-like Christ.
He sees the needs of others with a compassionate view-like Jesus.
He heals the wounds of others with love-like the Master.
The Christian is different only when Jesus rules his life.*

The world does not thing anything is wrong when others bar hop, drink, curse and create a mess of their relationships. They accept this as normal. But let one of their own accept Christ and refuse to do what they formally participated in and they think they have gone crazy, became a religious nut. Peter is reminding us to be different, to be strange. The NASB translates this verse, **“In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign you.” 1Pe 4:4**

The word excess here is an interesting one that means according to *Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary*, “stagnant water remaining after an inundation.” Hogs, and I do not mean to offend the pigs, think nothing of the smell of other pigs.

V- God Will Judge:

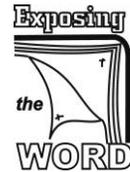
1Pe 4:4 **...speaking evil of you: 5 Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.**

We say the little saying, **“sticks and stones can break my bones but words can never hurt me.”** Well this certainly not true. Words hurt, hurt bad, and

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destroy us at times. When our former friends, those we trust now, or even a stranger speaks evil of us it stings.

How do we handle this? Peter reminds us that God is the one who will judge.

The story is told of a farmer in a Midwestern state who had a strong disdain for "religious" things. As he plowed his field on Sunday morning, he would shake his fist at the church people who passed by on their way to worship. October came and the farmer had his finest crop ever, the best in the entire county. When the harvest was complete, he placed an advertisement in the local paper which belittled the Christians for their faith in God. Near the end of his diatribe he wrote, "Faith in God must not mean much if someone like me can prosper."

*The response from the Christians in the community was quiet and polite. In the next edition of the town paper, a small ad appeared. It read simply, "God doesn't always settle His accounts in October."
William E. Brown in Making Sense of Your Faith*

Peter is encouraging those in the midst of trials, false accusations, persecutions beyond our imagination that it is God who will be the one who will bring them before Him someday to give an account of their actions. Beloved when we view things through eternal eyes it gives us a different sight than just temporary eyes of just one moment in time.

VI- This is Gospel's Purpose:

1Pe 4:6 *For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.*

There are a number of different opinions about what the meaning of the gospel being preached to the dead. I ask myself what is the purpose of the gospel, to bring lost men to Christ. To prepare men that die to enter heaven by faith in Christ, to cause men dead in sin to live spiritually again.

Barnes Notes give the following explanation:

It seems to me that the most natural and obvious interpretation is to refer it to those who were then dead, to whom the gospel had been preached when living, and who had become true Christians... In support of this it may be said:

(1) that this is the natural and obvious meaning of the word dead, which should be understood literally, unless there is some good reason in the connection for departing from the common meaning of the word.

(2) the apostle had just used the word in that sense in the previous verse.

(3) this will suit the connection, and accord with the design of the apostle. He was addressing those who were suffering persecution. It was natural, in such a connection, to refer to those who had died in the faith, and to show, for their encouragement, that though they had been put to death, yet they still lived to God.

Beloved we need to remember that the ultimate purpose of the gospel is to prepare us for death that will come to all.

VII- Are We doing Strange Things:

I have one last question to ask. Are we doing strange things? Or put another way, what are we doing to preach the gospel with our lives?

Someone gave a sundial to a group of people in the jungle. They regarded it as a fetish and wanted to keep it holy, so they built a house over it to keep it safe. This of course, kept the sun away from it. They had rendered it useless by trying to protect it. They honored the sundial, but they made it of no practical use. That's how many people regard Christianity. It has become something they have enclosed within the beautiful walls and stained glass windows of cathedrals. But, far worse, they also wall off their Christianity from their own individual daily lives. They genuflect to a statue or kiss an icon of a saint, but they fail to follow the teachings of the people these symbolize.

Jesus said in **Mat 5:14-16** *Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

Remember to be strange...