

Remaining Faithful to the End (Part 2)

I Peter 4:7-11

INTRODUCTION:

This morning we will be completing the message "Remaining Faithful to the End".

If you would open your Bibles this morning we will be reading from I Peter Chapter 4 verses 7 - 11 and then looking more closely at verses 9 - 11.

All Stand and Read Scripture

1 Peter 4:7-11 (NASB)

⁷The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober *spirit* for the purpose of prayer. ⁸Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. ⁹Be hospitable to one another without complaint. ¹⁰As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. ¹¹Whoever 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.

As we prepare to look more closely at verses 9 - 11 this morning, let's bow in a word of prayer.

Prayer

Peter starts this passage by reminding us that "*the end of all things is near*".

We are living in a world that is bound by time and our life here is not eternal. We **WILL ALL** die!

ILLUSTRATION:

Jim Taylor told me Friday of his cousin, Rob Barker, who went to the doctor to have his esophagus stretched because he was having trouble of swallowing and choking on his food. This was on a Friday. When the doctor looked at his throat, he noticed that Rob was full of aggressive cancer and it had spread throughout his body. When Rob recovered from the anesthesia, he was told of the bad news and sent home. Rob died the following Monday morning at the age of 61. He was the same age as Jim.

The Bible here sounds a note of warning and motivation, the end is at hand! And because the end is near, there are some specific ways we should be living out the will of God. So Peter gives his readers some very practical instructions on how to end our time on this earth so that we are properly prepared for our eternal future. You could call it: **Basic Instruction Before Leaving Earth**, or **B.I.B.L.E.**

Peter lays out for us four general keys that can help each of us to remain faithful to the end.

1. Be Diligent in Prayer.
2. Be Fervent in Love.
3. Be Faithful in Service.
4. Have a Passion for God's Glory.

BODY:

I. Be Diligent in Prayer. (Part 1)

1 Peter 4:7 (NASB)

7 The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.

When Peter says to be of sound judgment and sober spirit, he is warning that we be of clear thinking. That we not allow the world's idea of success or failure to creep into our prayers. We must be careful to not adapt the world's methods as the way to get things done. It is so easy to have these things begin to delude the way we pray. No, we must have a transformed mind when we pray that is not going to conform to this world.

B. Be Alert in Our Prayer. (Part 1)

Unless our hearts are transformed, we will be tempted to focus our prayers on things of the world that have no eternal values instead of heavenly things. We seem to be oblivious to the fact that we pray for secondary issues instead of the thing that really matters: **their spiritual health.**

C. Be Earnest in Our Prayer. (Part 1)

If we are clear thinking and we understand what is at stake and we are alert to the real spiritual struggles and battles and dangers out there, we will be earnest and serious in our prayers. Prayer is not a flippant thing. We have a desperate need and we need to be pleading out to the God who can answer and heal.

We need to be clear thinking, alert, and earnest in our prayer. That is the first key that Peter gives us so that we can remain faithful until Christ's return.

There is a second key to faithfulness and that is FERVENT LOVE.

II. BE FERVANT IN LOVE.

A. We love fervently by being forgiving. (Part 1)

Where God's love permeates the lives of His people, genuine forgiveness becomes a reality. Past hurts and harmful actions are forgotten. When we can truly forgive, we will stop keeping count of others' hurtful actions against us and we take scoreboard down.

B. We love fervently by being hospitable to one another.

1 Peter 4:9 (NASB)

⁹ Be hospitable to one another without complaint.

Hospitable means to be generous to strangers. The idea is to open up your home and your life to invite strangers in and care for them.

But notice that Peter does not say in this passage to be hospitable to strangers. He says to be hospitable to one another!

The truth is that our society does not wire us to be very good at hospitality. We are wired and trained to think of our home as our own little oasis. The place where we can get away. We prefer to meet in neutral territory.

But, if we are going to the fellowship of the body that the New Testament Christians had, it means that we are going to have to be hospitable to each other.

What does that mean practically in the 21st century?

- It may mean to invite that stay at home mom along with her screaming baby over for lunch so she can have an adult conversation in the middle of the day.
- It may be babysitting for the single mother who never gets a chance to get the errands done that she needs to do.
- It may mean babysitting for a young couple who desperately need to get away and spend some quality time with just each other.
- It may mean to open your home up to a friend or relative who have fallen on hard times and needs your positive support.

Peter is not giving us a suggestion here. It is not given to just a select few. This is a call for all of us to open up our homes and our lives to help our brothers and sisters in Christ.

C. We love fervently with gladness.

1 Peter 4:9 (NASB)

⁹ Be hospitable to one another **without complaint**.

If we complain, it is not coming from the heart. The wrong heart would invite someone over and then we are mad at them for actually coming.

We need to have fervent love for one another. It is God's will.

You see, the church is most definitely a place where we come to be taught and trained for battle. It is also a battlefield hospital where wounded people come to find strength and encouragement. But, it is also a place that we come to **serve** in the battle.

We need a fervent love for each other. That includes FORGIVING, HOSPITALITY, and GLADNESS.

III. BE FAITHFUL IN SERVICE.

1 Peter 4:10-11a (NASB)

¹⁰ As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. ¹¹ 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;

Every believer has a stewardship from God. Because every believer has been spiritually gifted by God to serve Him and the church.

Look at what Peter says there "*As each one has received a special gift*".

If you are a believer in Christ, the Spirit dwells within you and you have been gifted.

Paul says

1 Corinthians 12:7a (NASB)

7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit...

The manifestation of the Spirit is give to each one. You have a unique collection of talents, experiences, and opportunities that makes you uniquely equipped to serve Christ and the church. And that gift is a stewardship. A steward is similar to what we call a manager today. It is someone who has been given an authority and a responsibility over something though they don't own it. One day they will give an account to the real owner when called upon.

That is what our gifts are. Peter says that we are to use them "*as good stewards of the manifold grace of God*". Our gifts are not ours to do with as we please. We have been given the responsibility and authority over them, but some day we will be required to give an account to the true owner of that gift on what we did with it.

If that is the case, we ought to ask ourselves, "What exactly are we supposed to do with them?"

Peter tells us very clearly what the purpose of these gifts are in verse 10.

1 Peter 4:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ As each one has received a special gift, employ (or minister) it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

We have been given these gifts to minister to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:7 (NASB)

I have already read the first part of it "***7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit***", but there is more "***for the common good.***"

In other words, I have been given a spiritual gift not to just profit myself, but to profit **ALL**.

Here is the question that we all need to be asking, "How am I profiting my brothers and sisters in Christ?"

You see, we are very good at asking, "How are my brothers and sisters in Christ profiting me?"

We tend to think, "Maybe I should go to that Church because they have more programs and they might profit ME better." But that is not the question that the Bible tells us to ask! It tells us to ask, "How am I profiting others?".

When everyone stops asking, "What is in it for me?" and starts asking, "How can I profit others using my talents?", then we will find a whole army of people seeking to profit each other. In the end we will find that our own needs are met far better than we could have ever imagined.

This will happen when we quit thinking that it is about us and we start asking "How can I profit and benefit my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ?".

Peter gives us two general categories of gifts to consider.

1 Peter 4:11a (NASB)

11 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;

A. The Gift of Speaking.

This would include preaching, teaching (whether children, adults, evangelism, counseling, or so forth). God has gifted many to serve the body in that way. The ability to understand and communicate scripture so that people can be built up in their faith.

For those who seek to serve the body in that way, here is the instruction: "*do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God*".

In other words be sure that what you are preaching, teaching, and/or counseling is the Word of God and the Word of God only.

The Apostle Paul had a young follower, Timothy, that was following him in the ministry. Paul had taught, trained, disciplined, and mentored him. We have a record of some of his final instructions to Timothy whom he wanted to remain faithful in the ministry.

2 Timothy 2:15 (NASB)

15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

All of us who are involved in preaching and teaching must take this to heart. Study and understand the scripture and preach and teach only what the Bible teaches us.

Understand that this is a gift that God has given you to serve the body and you are to do it by speaking God's truth from His Word and nothing else.

Peter then tells of a second category of gifts.

B. The Gift of Serving.

1 Peter 4:11b (NASB)

11...whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies;

This is a more "hands on" way in which you can use the gifts that God has given you. This is a ministry of serving to meet needs through giving, though helping, or through acts of mercy.

This may be done through

- Visiting.
- Sending cards to the sick or shut-in.
- Cooking meals for a new mom or an elderly person.
- Helping someone fix their car.
- Making a home repair for someone.
- Or countless other ways that you can use your talent to help people in need.

Many people have the ability to see those needs and are equipped to meet them in different ways.

Notice the way that we are to serve. We are not to serve based upon our own strength, but Peter says, "**serve by the strength which God supplies**".

Don't think that it depends upon you! It really doesn't. It is the Spirit working through you. It is not our great wisdom, our profound words, or our ability. It is His. Peter says serve that way and when you do use God's ability, trusting in Him and not in yourself.

Our lives are as a vapor that appears and quickly goes away. The purpose of our life to find God and remain faithful to the end. We need to get off of the sidelines and start using God's gifts to serve the body of Christ.

Peter has told us that we need to

1. Be Diligent in Prayer.
2. Be Fervent in Love.
3. Be Faithful in Service.

And now there is one final thing that we need.

IV. HAVE A PASSION FOR GOD'S GLORY.

1 Peter 4:11c (NASB)

11...so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

What is our purpose here?

What is our goal here?

That in **ALL** things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 10:31 (NASB)

31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Our God and our Redeemer is the most glorious thing in all of the universe.

We need to be gripped by His glory.

For too many of us, the God we envision is far too small. We cannot fathom His majesty and strength. He is glorious and wonderful beyond our capacity to understand.

He should be the supreme center of our lives. Everything that we do or say should be done for His glory and to give honor to His name. If we could only sense His glory!

If we are to **Remain Faithful to the End**, we must be motivated by how great our God and our Savior really is!

CONCLUSION:

In closing, I would like to ask you this morning,

Are You Diligent in Prayer?

Are You Fervent in Love for Your Brothers and Sisters in Christ?

Are You Using Your Gifts to be Faithful in Service?

Do You Give God Glory in Everything You Do and Say?

We are not guaranteed a tomorrow. When you die, your window of opportunity to accept Christ in your life and to serve Him by remaining faithful is gone forever.

We find ourselves eagerly willing to accept Christ as our Lord and Savior and cheerfully accepting the remission of sin that He has promised to us. But we often are **painfully slow** in truly **surrendering** ourselves over to Him and forsaking worldly things. How slow we are to finally realize that God's way IS the right way and begin to experience the JOY and HOPE that comes by being faithful to Him and doing His will.

Romans 12:2 (NASB)

² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

If you are not living your life for Christ; if you cannot see a difference between the way you live the rest of the week from the way you lived before you accepted Christ into your life; then your eternity is in jeopardy.

If you have not accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior, do it today. Don't wait until you have cleaned up your life. **You don't clean yourself up to come to the Christ; you surrender yourself to Christ, to let Him clean you up!**

God Be with You till We Meet Again

God be with you till we meet again, By His counsels guide uphold you,

With His sheep securely fold you, God be with you till we meet again.

Till we meet...Till we meet, Till we meet at Jesus' feet;

Till we meet...Till we meet, God be with you till we meet again.