

## Hope When Life is Hard...



A VERSE BY VERSE  
EXPOSITION OF  
THE EPISTLE OF  
FIRST PETER

### Gutsy Fellowship 1 Peter 4:7-11 (704)

**1 Peter 4:7-11**...*The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer. <sup>8</sup> Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. <sup>9</sup> Be hospitable to one another without complaint. <sup>10</sup> As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. <sup>11</sup> Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as 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.*

These verses constitute the final paragraph of the second major section of Peter's letter. This section was begun back in Chapter 2 verse 11. Indeed, 2:11-12 and these verses in Chapter 4 form what is called a chiasm that marks the beginning and end of the section. *The*

*day of visitation* in **2:12** is echoed by *the end of all things* in **4:7** while *glorify God* in **2:12** is echoed by *God may be glorified* in **4:11**.

Certainly the most significant and stirring feature of this paragraph is the doxology with which it ends: *so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.* This brings us immediately to the main point I want to make this morning: **the prime motivation and the deepest concern in our life together is that God be glorified in all things.** Surely, only as we are passionate for the glory of God above all things will our fellowship be tough, tenacious, intense, and strong. Only as we are passionate for the glory of God above all things will our fellowship have backbone, energy, force, and potency. Only as we are passionate for the glory of God above all things will our life together be beautiful, pleasing, warm, and affectionate. Only as we are passionate for the glory of God above all things will our fellowship be attractive and winsome in the eyes of a world utterly estranged from and ignorant of the grace of God in the gospel. Only as we are radically passionate for the glory of God will we, indeed, enjoy Him (SC #1).

When we consider the glory of God, we use both a nominal term and a verbal term. The noun “glory” is the outward manifestation of all of

the perfections, the attributes of God. As His goodness or power or righteousness, or whatever attribute it may be, is displayed in the universe, God's glory is revealed. All of His attributes shine forth His glory or honor. The verb "glorify" is the declaration, the ascription of praise, honor, and worship to God. It is an acknowledgement of God as He has revealed Himself to be (adapted from a sermon by Brett Baker). To glorify God is to esteem Him as most excellent, to worship Him as most worthy, to love Him as our most delightful treasure, and, finally, to obey Him as our Creator, Redeemer, King, and Friend.

Indeed, we glorify God by actually living obediently to Christ.

**2 Corinthians 5:15**, *He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.*

**Romans 14:8**, *for if we live, we live for the Lord.* Indeed, in **Philippians 1:20** we read that Paul's hope was that *Christ be exalted in [his] body, whether by life or by death.* Thomas Watson says, "We live to God when we live to His service, and lay ourselves out wholly for God."

This is surely the case in our life together as a community of faith.

Remember, **the prime motivation and the deepest concern in our life together is that God be glorified in all things.**

**The end of all things is at hand.** This adds a measure of urgency and importance to this idea of glorifying God in all things. On occasion I am so sound asleep that my alarm clock rocks me out of bed. I fumble around almost half-conscious, groping for the clock, desperate to locate the proper button to press to end the terrifying, intrusive noise. Afterwards I have to lie back down to catch my breath and gather my wits. This sentence jars us out of our slumber. Beloved, things will not go on as they are forever. Ours is a linear view of history. It had a beginning and it will have an end. And with the incarnation of Jesus Christ the end has come near. “The goal to which all redemptive history has been leading is at hand” (Grudem, p. 173).

The return of Christ is near. **1 Peter 1:13** says, *fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at **the revelation of Jesus Christ (1:5; 4:13)***. The end of the material universe as we know it is near. **2 Peter 3:10**, *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.* The final judgment of men is near. **1 Peter 4:5** says, *but they shall give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.*

**Therefore.** The prospect that the end is near presses upon us a radical sense of our own finiteness, our own frailty, our own vulnerability, and our ultimate accountability to God. So in light of the shortness and seriousness of life; in light of our hard circumstances and the end of the age what kind of lives are we to live? Peter asks essentially the same thing in **2 Peter 3:11**, *Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness?* In **4:2** he says *we are to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.* We are to live as those whose **prime motivation and deepest concern is that God be glorified in all things.**

Peter cites four ways in which God is glorified within the community of faith. Look at the text as I point out these four to you. First, in **verse 7**, *be of sound judgment and sober spirit.* Second, in **verse 8**, *keep fervent in your love for one another.* Third, in **verse 9**, *be hospitable to one another.* Fourth, in **verse 10**, *employ [your gift] in serving one another.* Continue looking at the text. You will notice that to each of these actions there is attached an explanatory, qualifying, or descriptive phrase. *Be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.* *Keep fervent in love because love covers a multitude of sins.* *Be hospitable without complaint.* *Employ your gift as good stewards of the grace of God.*

In **1 Peter 4:7** we are called to **be of sound judgment and sober *spirit* for the purpose of prayer**. This is God's call to a sane and sober, a deliberate and disciplined life. Beloved, it is time to be done with casual Christian living. It is time to be done with a spectator attitude toward the work of the Gospel. It is time to be done with the idea that scrupulous fulfillment of your membership vows is optional. It is time to be done with the idea that we'll assume responsibility for a ministry if and when it is convenient. It is time to be done with unchecked self-indulgence when it comes to the possessions and pursuits of the world. It is time to be done with reckless speech and attitudes that have no place among Christians. We are called to be men and women of sound judgment; thinking about and assessing things accurately and wisely according to the Word of God. We are to be those who put things in proper perspective; who recognize the relative importance of things according to the infallible Word of God. Sober means our minds are spiritually alert, not lazy, careless, or otherwise inebriated. A man may be a teetotaler when it comes to alcohol but can be an absolute drunk when it comes to spiritual sensibilities and wisdom.

**For the purpose of prayer.** "Sobriety and a clear mind have one value above others. They equip us for prayer. [Prayer is] sober, direct,

profoundly thoughtful communication with the Lord” (Clowney, p. 178). Prayer – not zeal, not enthusiasm, not activity - is the primary overflow of a God-oriented life; a life being lived for the glory of God in all things. The man given to a life of sober-minded prayer has caught a glimpse and is pursuing hard after God’s perspective, God’s purposes, God’s provision, God’s precepts, and God’s passions (those things as revealed as particularly important and dear to Him). He wrestles in prayer that he might be submissive to God’s providential dealing with Him. He spends himself in agonizing intercession for God’s people. And in this kind of life God is glorified. **The prime motivation and the deepest concern in our life together is that God be glorified in all things.**

Prayer, of course, in verse 7 has to do with our relationship to God. The three *one anothers* in verses 8, 9, and 10 have to do with our relationships within the community of faith.

The second thing that brings glory to God is found in **verse 8. Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.** **Above all** suggests that sincere, vibrant love fuels every other activity in the church. **I Corinthians 13:13** *But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.* “A love that can be quickly cooled, or that is not able to withstand the rigors of an

outside persecution intent on destroying the community is of little use” (Achte-meier, p. 295). Indeed, love in the community is to be characterized by **fervency**. Fervent love possesses a measure of toughness. This love is neither syrupy emotion nor sappy sentimentalism. Jesus said, “*love one another, even as I have loved you*” (**John 13:34**). Biblical love is a courageous, unrestrained, and deliberate giving of oneself for the welfare of another. Fervent love possesses a measure of intensity. **Deuteronomy 6:5** *and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might*. Fervent love possesses a measure of persistence. **I Corinthians 13:7** *love bears all things ... endures all things*. Fervent love possesses a measure of sincerity. **Romans 12:9** *Let love be without hypocrisy*.

Dear congregation of the Lord, sincere, mutual love is the key to a vibrant, God-glorifying, saint-edifying, peaceful and pure life together ... **because love covers a multitude of sins**. This can be taken in one of two ways. “[It] can be taken to mean that the one who loves contributes to the divine forgiveness of his own sins” (Achte-meier, p. 295). We reject this view. Only the blood of Christ shed for sinners can cancel sin or cleanse us from sin. But, beloved, our love for one another *covers* many sins. **Proverbs 10:12** says, *Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all transgressions*. When someone

is on fire we roll him around on the ground or throw a blanket around him. We *cover* him and in so doing snuff out the oxygen that gives life to and feeds the flames. Love does the same. Love snuffs out the fires started by unchecked sin.

Wayne Grudem says, “Where love abounds in a fellowship of Christians many small offenses, and even some large ones, are readily overlooked and forgotten. But where love is lacking, every word is viewed with suspicion, every action is liable to misunderstanding, and conflicts abound – to Satan’s perverse delight” (1 Peter, pp. 173-74).

The third way that God is glorified in the church is through hospitality. **1 Peter 4:9 Be hospitable to one another without complaint.** When the New Testament mentions hospitality it does so in very brief terms. **Romans 12:13**, for example, tells us to be *contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality*. The Bible seems to assume that we know or ought to know what hospitality is. I think it is fair to say that we are hospitable as our homes become ministry stations where all men but especially believers (**Gal. 6:10**) are served and encouraged in Jesus’ name. Hospitality has been a hallmark of the people of God in both testaments. Historically it has included such things as providing room and board to travelers in

need, opening up one's home to the church for worship, entertaining guests in one's home, housing missionaries on their travels, making one's home available for ministry purposes, and so on.

Obviously such a lifestyle is not always easy. Hospitality can be inconvenient on occasion. Friction between hosts and guests may arise. You run the risk of being taken advantage of. You have to endure loss of privacy for a while. All the same this ministry is to be engaged in **without complaint**; without grumbling. Indeed hospitality is to be offered with gladness. You see, grumbling is ultimately a complaint against God and His providential ordering of the circumstances of our lives. God is glorified when our homes become ministry stations where all men but especially believers (**Gal. 6:10**) are served and encouraged in Jesus' name. We must remember, **the prime motivation and the deepest concern in our life together is that God be glorified in all things.**

Finally, **1 Peter 4:10**. **As each one has received a *special gift*, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.** "Within the fellowship of the church, earnest love for one another (v.8) will find expression in the use of spiritual gifts" (Grudem, p. 174). A spiritual gift is a capacity, an ability given to you by God for ministry in and to the body of Christ. Every believer has

been given at least one gift. These gifts come gratuitously from God and so are called grace gifts. They are not given for the benefit of the believers upon whom they are bestowed. Indeed, spiritual gifts are for the benefit of others and are to be **employed** to that end.

It is the design of God that we **serve one another** primarily through the faithful exercise of our spiritual gifts. Now we all serve one another as certain needs arise and as we have opportunity. We may help set up chairs, cook a meal, send a note, participate in work days at the church, help with a wedding, mow someone's lawn, visit someone in the hospital, and so on. These are general acts of kindness that should be engaged in simply because you are a member of the church. But your primary ministry - the one that occupies the lion's share of your time and energy - is to be geared around your particular spiritual gift.

It is just like our loving heavenly Father to supply us with what we need to serve His people and, thereby, to glorify Him. You see, it is through the faithful exercise of your gift that the grace of God reaches others. This is why ignorance and neglect at this point are so very grievous. Books, seminars, and surveys on spiritual gifts abound. The irony is that very few believers can name their spiritual gift and cite the specific ways they have exercised and are exercising it in the church to the glory of God. Beloved this is how God intended you to

serve. This is how God has equipped you to serve. As you do so you will be fulfilled in ministry, other believers will be blessed, and God will be glorified in His church.

In verse 11 Peter cites two examples of how gifts are to be exercised to the end that God would get the glory. **Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies.** These are not specific gifts but rather categories of gifts – speaking gifts and serving gifts. Here’s the idea. If you have been given a speaking gift, for example – preaching, teaching, evangelism, exhortation – then you must exercise the gift “with the seriousness of purpose which one would use if he were speaking God’s words” (Grudem, p. 176).

Serving, if “performed by merely human energy and for one’s own status in the eyes of others can soon become a wearying activity” (Grudem, p. 176). But ministry performed in the strength that God provides ... that’s a different thing altogether. The man or woman employing their gift in God’s strength goes beyond what might ordinarily be expected, attends to details others may overlook, stays with a situation when others tire and quit. Their ministry is consistent from year to year. No task is below them. They know great joy in the performance of even the most menial task. The

encouragement, comfort, and the help others receive is real. And in all of this God is glorified.

Indeed, this is the purpose for our stewardship and, ultimately, for our lives in total. In prayer, in love, in hospitality, in ministry to one another, **the prime motivation and the deepest concern is that God be glorified in all things.**

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#### Chiastic arrangement of elements

- A     *The day of visitation (2:12)*
- B     *Glorify God (2:12)*
- B'    *God may be glorified (4:11)*
- A'    *The end of all things (4:7)*

The main point: **the prime \_\_\_\_\_ and the deepest \_\_\_\_\_  
in our life together is that God be \_\_\_\_\_ in all things.**

To glorify God is to \_\_\_\_\_ Him as most excellent ... to  
\_\_\_\_\_ Him as most worthy ... to \_\_\_\_\_ Him as our  
most delightful treasure, and, finally ... to \_\_\_\_\_ Him as our Creator,  
Redeemer, King, and Friend.

Indeed, we glorify God by actually \_\_\_\_\_ obediently to Christ  
(II Cor. 5:15; Rom. 14:8; Phil. 1:20).

**The end of all things is at hand ... therefore**

**Peter cites four ways in which God is glorified within the community of faith.**

**1 Peter 4:7**

Beloved, it is time to be done with \_\_\_\_\_ Christian living. It is time to be done with a \_\_\_\_\_ attitude toward the work of the Gospel. It is time to be done with the idea that scrupulous fulfillment of your membership vows is \_\_\_\_\_. It is time to be done with the idea that we'll assume responsibility for a ministry if and when it is \_\_\_\_\_. It is time to be done with unchecked self-indulgence when it comes to the possessions and pursuits of the world. It is time to be done with reckless \_\_\_\_\_ and attitudes that have no place among Christians.

**1 Peter 4:8**

Love in the community is to be characterized by **fervency**.

Fervent love possesses a measure of \_\_\_\_\_ (**John 13:34**).

Fervent love possesses a measure of \_\_\_\_\_ (**Deut. 6:5**).

Fervent love possesses a measure of \_\_\_\_\_ (**I Cor. 13:7**).

Fervent love possesses a measure of \_\_\_\_\_ (**Rom. 12:9**).

*"Where love abounds in a fellowship of Christians many small offenses, and even some large ones, are readily \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.*

*But where love is lacking, every word is viewed with suspicion, every action is liable to misunderstanding, and \_\_\_\_\_ abound – to Satan's perverse delight"*

(Wayne Grudem, *1 Peter*, pp. 173-74).

**1 Peter 4:9**

We are hospitable as our homes become \_\_\_\_\_ where all men but especially believers (Gal. 6:10) are \_\_\_\_\_ and encouraged in Jesus' name.

*Without grumbling.* Hospitality is to be offered with \_\_\_\_\_.

**1 Peter 4:10**

A spiritual gift is a \_\_\_\_\_, an ability given to you by God for \_\_\_\_\_ in and to the body of Christ.

Your primary ministry - the one that occupies the lion's share of your \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ - is to be geared around your particular spiritual gift.

You see, it is through the faithful exercise of your gift that the \_\_\_\_\_ of God reaches others.

As you do so you will be \_\_\_\_\_ in ministry, other believers will be  
\_\_\_\_\_, and God will be glorified in His church.