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Living For The Will Of God

1 PETER 4:1-6

Introduction

1. One hundred and six years ago this year, a man by the name of Thomas O. Chisholm penned the words to a hymn which came to be known by the title, "Living For Jesus."

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Living for Jesus, a life that is true,
Striving to please Him in all that I do;
Yielding allegiance, glad-hearted and free,
This is the pathway of blessing for me.

Refrain:

O Jesus, Lord and Savior, I give myself to Thee,
For Thou, in Thy atonement, didst give Thyself for me;
I own no other Master, my heart shall be Thy throne;
My life I give, henceforth to live, O Christ, for Thee alone.

2. The apostle Peter said that when we are living such a life, we are living "for the will of God."
3. To live in this way is also to invite opposition because of our faith.
4. It may be that you have been laughed at because of the beliefs you hold or perhaps just given a blank stare of disbelief.
5. I dare say that none of us have ever been refused service in a restaurant or shouted down for our faith.
6. The Christians of Peter's day were not only verbally abused, but also physically persecuted for their faith.
7. As we have seen throughout our study, Peter has constantly encouraged them to remain true to their faith in spite of such unjust treatment.

8. As you and I seek to live our lives “for the will of God,” I would like for us to take to heart two things which Peter is telling his readers:
 - a. Live a life of purity.
 - b. Live life with the end in view.

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I. Live A Life Of Purity

A. CHOOSE THE SAME ATTITUDE TOWARD SUFFERING AS DID CHRIST

“Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, 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.” (1 Peter 4:1–2, NASB95)

1. If you and I are to live a life of purity then Jesus must be our example.
2. His was a life of innocent suffering.
3. Some 700 years before our Lord lay as a babe in a manger in Bethlehem, God spoke through His prophet Isaiah of the sufferings our Savior would experience (Isaiah 53:4a, 5).

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“Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried”

(Isaiah 53:4, NASB95)

“But He was pierced through for our transgressions,
He was crushed for our iniquities;
The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him,
And by His scourging we are healed.”

(Isaiah 53:5, NASB95)

4. When Peter writes, “Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose” (1 Peter 4:1a), he is looking back in

his letter to two statements he has already made concerning our Lord's suffering (1 Peter 2:21-24; 3:18).

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“For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.” (1 Peter 2:21–24, NASB95)

“For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;” (1 Peter 3:18, NASB95)

5. You and I arm ourselves with the same purpose, the same attitude toward innocent suffering that Jesus had. What is it?
6. It is the understanding that any suffering we may experience as we seek to live righteous lives is normal in our spiritually fallen world.

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- a. In the upper room with His disciples prior to His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus told them, “If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you” (John 15:20).
 - b. In his letter to the Christians in Philippi, the apostle Paul wrote, “For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake” (Philippians 1:29, NASB95).
 - c. At the end of his own life, Paul told Timothy, “Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Timothy 3:12, NASB95).
7. When we chose to live for “the will of God” rather than for “the lusts of men” we made a definite break with sin in our lives.

8. Now, because we are seeking to “be holy in all [our] behavior” (1:15), we will most likely find ourselves suffering “for doing what is right” (3:17).

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B. DON' T GIVE SIN ANY MORE OF YOUR TIME

“For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries.” (1 Peter 4:3, NASB95)

1. In essence, what Peter is saying is,
 - a. “The time you have already spent living in sin is enough.”
 - b. “What is to be accomplished by going back for one last hurrah in sin?”
2. Prior to their conversion, the Christians of Asia Minor lived lives that would be considered anything but virtuous.
3. They were involved in more than their fair share of sexual sins and drunkenness.
4. The words which Peter uses here describe reckless lives which abandoned all self-control.
5. However, a radical change in their behavior took place when they were converted.
6. The same is true for you and me when we repent and come to Christ in obedient faith.
7. The things we think about, the behaviors in which we participate, even the people with whom we associate changes.
8. Our goal as Christians is to be holy even as our heavenly Father is holy (1 Peter 1:16); it is to abstain from those fleshly lusts which, as Peter said, “wage war against [our] souls” (1 Peter 2:11).
9. This is what it means to “live a life of purity,” as we “live for the will of God.”

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II. Live With The End In View

A. REMEMBER, JUDGMENT IS COMING

“In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign you; but they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.” (1 Peter 4:4–5, NASB95)

1. In their new lifestyle of following Jesus the Christians of Asia Minor found themselves uncomfortable around their “former friends.”
2. These “former friends” were surprised at the radical change which took place in the behavior of these Christians.
3. They couldn’t understand why anyone would give up such pleasures.
4. As a matter of fact, they resented the Christians so much that they turned on them — they maligned them.
5. The unbelievers of Peter’s day saw the Christians as repressive.
6. One Roman historian even referred to them as “haters of mankind” (Tacitus).
7. Satan has always worked to confuse mankind’s moral compass.
8. He tries to convince us that what God calls good is actually evil, and what God declares evil is actually good.

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9. The Old Testament prophet Isaiah once said, “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter” (Isaiah 5:20, NASB95).
10. We see the same today as we who wear the name of Christ seek to uphold the sanctify of marriage and human life.
11. What comfort does Peter provide for those of us who may find ourselves suffering under such unjust judgment from others?
12. It is this — those who unjustly persecute us will one day stand before the righteous Judge of all the earth to give an account for their actions.

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13. The apostle Paul told the philosophers in Athens that God “has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed” (Acts 17:31).
14. This judgment of God through Jesus Christ will include both those who are living and those who have died — no one will escape.

Slide 10**B. CONTINUE TO SHARE THE GOSPEL**

“For the gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead, that though they are judged in the flesh as men, they may live in the spirit according to the will of God.” (1 Peter 4:6, NASB95)

1. What do we do in the meantime?
2. We keep preaching the gospel, we keep sharing the truth of God’s Word.
3. The message which we seek to communicate to our friends, neighbors and even our enemies is that there are consequences to our actions, and one day, all of us will stand before God (Romans 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

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“So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.”
(Romans 14:12, NASB95)

“For we 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.” (2 Corinthians 5:10, NASB95)

4. Peter said that it was because of the coming final judgement that the gospel was preached, even to those who believed in Christ but later died.
5. Even though each of us are “judged in the flesh as men,” though we must all experience the same physical death due to Adam’s sin in the garden (Romans 5:12), we may still “live in the spirit according to the will of God” (v. 6).

Conclusion

1. Today, if you are a Christian, I want to encourage you to live a life of purity.
 - a. It may mean that you will suffer for your faith.
 - b. Know that if you are treated unjustly it is because you have made a conscious break with sin and are seeking to live your life in a way that imitates Christ.
 - c. Also, know that Satan is the one who, behind the scenes, continues to fight against you, trying to get you to go back to your old life.
2. Let me also encourage you to live your life in view of the end.
 - a. There is a day of judgment coming, in which Jesus will judge the living and the dead.
 - b. Keep working to share the gospel with others around you.
 - c. Pray that “God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Timothy 2:25) and ultimately eternal life.

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3. If you are not a Christian today, please know it is only in this life that we have the opportunity for eternal salvation.
4. Once we pass from this life our fate is sealed, like the rich man of whom Jesus spoke in Luke 16, no opportunity will be given change our final destiny.
5. Please make the choice today to come to Christ in obedient faith and be born again to that living hope which God makes possible to us through His Son.