

Text: 1 Pt 4.1-2

I've taken our title tonight from our text,

Therefore Arm Yourselves

The military imagery occurs often in the epistles. Perhaps the reality of living in a military dictatorship (the Roman Empire) led to this kind of thinking. Perhaps the reality of living the Christian life in a hostile world also contributes.

“the Christian life is a truceless war with sin”¹

“The martial language indicates that discipline and grit are needed to live the Christian life, particularly in view of the suffering believers encounter.”²

I suppose there is an all too human tendency to look for the easy way out if times of difficulty and pressure should come.

- Temptation to cut corners
- Temptation to compromise principles
- Temptation to cut and run

Peter repeatedly urges his readers to exemplify a clear testimony for Christ. In the passage we just completed, he offered the Lord's suffering and triumph over death as a reason why we should live this way.

Our passage starts on that basis, “therefore...”

Therefore, we are to make a determined effort to live as Peter exhorted:

^{1 Pt 3.8-9} ¶ To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; ⁹ not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.

This kind of life should be ours, even if we suffer for it.

The fact that Jesus died and rose again, triumphing over the powers arrayed against him, motivates us to “gird our armour on,” as the hymn says.

Read 1 Pt 4.1-6, text 1-2

¹ D. Edmond Hiebert, *1 Peter* (Winona Lake, Ind.: BMH Books, 1997), 257.

² Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, v. 37 (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 199.

Proposition: The armor of spiritual warfare (and Christian living) is the mind of Christ as he faced the cross.

I. The ground of our determination (“since Christ has suffered”)

A. What “suffered in the flesh” means

1. The phrase points back to 3.18

^{1 Pt 3.18} 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;

2. Suffered in the flesh means: Jesus died

3. Also mentioned in 1.11, 2.21

^{1 Pt 1.11} seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.

^{1 Pt 2.21} 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,

B. The function of Christ’s suffering in our behaviour

“The expression is a genitive absolute and depicts the background against which the following imperative is issued; it was to have a causal impact on the conduct of the readers.”³

1. Note: grammar alert! A genitive absolute is a phrase that is unconnected to the main sentence.

a. Main sentence: You also (emphatic) with the same mind arm yourselves

b. Independent participial phrase: Christ suffered in the flesh

2. So, the phrase is the ground or foundation of the command

What we are saying is that the unjust suffering and death of Christ becomes our pattern or example on which to act.

³ Hiebert, *1 Peter*, 256.

II. The essence of our determination (“arm yourselves...”)

A. The imperative is personal: “You also”

1. Reminder, pronoun not required, so when stated is emphatic
2. Positioned first, so in the position of emphasis

B. The call is to put on your military equipment

1. The word can have reference to equipping yourself for a non-militaristic task (a gardener could pick up his hoe, etc)
2. However, in the context, the military connotation best

“It is best not to keep to the more general basic sense ‘prepare yourselves,’ since the specialised sense predominates in current usage.”⁴

3. The word has military cognates

- a. The full armour of God (Eph 6.11)
- b. The Gk soldier, called a “hoplite,” derived from this word
- c. Weapons of warfare (2 Cor 10.4)

4. The essence of the call

- a. The aorist imperative calls us to begin the action, with a stress on its urgency
- b. The middle voice “arm **yourselves**” communicates personal responsibility

C. The nature of the equipment

1. Versions

- a. NAU “with the same purpose”
- b. KJV “with the same mind”
- c. ESV “with the same way of thinking”
- d. NET “with the same attitude”

⁴ Albrecht Oepke, “Ὀπλον, Ὀπλίζω, Πανοπλία, Ζώννυμι, Διαζώννυμι, Περιζώννυμι, Ζώνη, Θώραξ, Ὑποδέω (Ὑπόδημα, Σανδάλιον), Θυρεός, Περικεφαλαία,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed., vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 294, 295.

2. Same word in Heb 4.12

Heb 4.12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and **intentions** of the heart.

3. Meaning

“Originally denoting the act of thought, it came also to denote ‘the result: thought, realization, insight, disposition.’ The word thus indicates a viewpoint or resolve that expresses itself in determined action.”⁵

“He suffered unjustly, willingly, not retaliating, committing His case to God, expecting the vindication He received (2:21–23; 3:18–22).”⁶

“The principle of thought and feeling here referred to is that of the dying life voluntarily accepted and put on as armour, and finding expression in the meek and courageous pursuit of the spiritual life.”⁷

D. The mind of Christ (Phil 2.5-8)

1. Different word (“thinking”) used in Philipians
2. An attitude that infused his whole ministry: incarnation, innocence, humiliation, suffering, death, resurrection

⁵ Hiebert, *1 Peter*, 256.

⁶ Robert E. Picirilli, *Commentary on the Books of 1 and 2 Thessalonians*, ed. Robert E. Picirilli, The Randall House Bible Commentary (Nashville, TN: Randall House, 1990), 186.

⁷ Edward Gordon Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd, 1946), 208.

3. We need to put that attitude in our inner man

“You may take a lantern that has no candle in it, and you may clean the exterior as long as you like, but it will not guide you through the darkness. There must be a candle placed within, or else it will be useless to you, cleanse it as you may. And within man’s set nature there must be put the divine candle of faith in Christ; otherwise, all his outward moralities will leave him a dark lantern still.”⁸

III. The end of our determination (“ceased from sin”)

A. The rationale of arming one’s self with the mind of Christ

1. The one who has “suffered in the flesh” has ceased from sin
 - a. Suffered in the flesh = death
 - b. Someone who is dead doesn’t sin
2. The idea is not “let’s suffer so we can cease from sin”
3. Rather, let’s put on the mindset of the determined Christ, wh went forward to death with a higher purpose in view

From the Servant songs of Isaiah:

Isa 50.7 For the Lord GOD helps Me, Therefore, I am not disgraced; Therefore, **I have set My face like flint**, And I know that I will not be ashamed.

Heb 12.2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

4. Like Romans 6: “consider (reckon *κiv*) yourselves to be dead to sin” — think of yourselves as “dead to that”

B. The purpose: a new way of life (v. 2)

1. No longer for the lusts of men

⁸ Charles H Spurgeon, *Spurgeon Commentary: 1 Peter*, ed. Elliot Ritzema and Jessi Strong, Spurgeon Commentary Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014), 1 Pt 4.1.

2. But for the will of God

Notice that lusts are plural, many and varied. The will of God is singular: focused, simple, faithful, enduring, leading to Glory.

Conclusion:

Proposition: The armor of spiritual warfare (and Christian living) is the mind of Christ as he faced the cross.

Soldiers of Christ, arise,
and put your armor on,
strong in the strength which God supplies
thro' his eternal Son.
Strong in the Lord of hosts,
and in his mighty pow'r,
who in the strength of Jesus trusts
is more than conqueror. (#592)