

**Text: 1 Pt 4.2-3**

Last week I am afraid I got too far into the weeds of my research and the message was less clear than I could have wished. That happens ... I have this compulsion to share everything I've found out about a passage, but sometimes it doesn't come out the way I would like.

This week I am determined to be more clear, so we will see.

To sum up verse 1:

God calls us to equip ourselves for spiritual battle by taking the Lord's purpose in suffering death for sin as our own armour in our battle with sin, especially in the light of persecution.

The goal of verse 2:

To live no longer for the lusts of men but for the will of God.

One of Peter's themes is that Christians should not put themselves under the attack of outsiders for anything except the name of the Lord.

This becomes a motive for godly living.

Yet suffering Christians are tempted to give up godly living, thinking, "I gave my life to the Lord and this is what I get? It's not worth it."

Peter assures us that it is worth it, the Lord Jesus already won the victory over evil, our suffering is the dregs of evil, and victory in Christ already is ours.

Verse 3, our main text for tonight, adds a motivation, using the word "for."

Read 1 Pt 4.1-6, text 2-3

Hiebert: "Willingness to suffer for righteousness is not natural; to endure such suffering victoriously requires strong motivation."<sup>1</sup>

Hiebert lists three motivations from the following verses, we are going to occupy ourselves today with "the motivation from a sinful past," his summary of v. 3.

**Proposition:** Our past should be enough for us to endure suffering for Jesus' sake in our present.

---

<sup>1</sup> D. Edmond Hiebert, *1 Peter* (Winona Lake, Ind.: BMH Books, 1997), 259.

## I. Contesting wills (2)

### A. Set in contrast: the lusts of men vs. the will of God

1. The lusts of men: plural, varied, unstable
2. The will of God: singular, focused, stable

“The plural, ‘desires’ or ‘lusts,’ indicates the many and variable cravings of fallen human nature, and the singular *will* indicates the unitary, harmonious, and abiding will of God for His people. His nature assures that His will for Christians is righteous and beneficent.”<sup>2</sup>

### B. The context of the struggle: “the rest of our time in the flesh”

1. Our present existence in view
2. Salvation does not eradicate the flesh
3. However, salvation provides a goal and a pattern

### C. Verse 3 contrasts the “desire of the Gentiles” [synonym for “will” of God]

1. The two words overlap in meaning
  - a. will: “that which is desired or wished for”<sup>3</sup>
  - b. desire: “that which is desired, with the implication of accompanying planning and will”<sup>4</sup>
2. There is no doubt that what we want, we labor and scheme to get

I just added a couple of items to my Amazon wish list... they are in the back of my mind, things I think about and desire, with the idea that “someday...”

Rm 13.14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to *its* lusts.

---

<sup>2</sup> Hiebert, 259.

<sup>3</sup> Johannes E. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 287.

<sup>4</sup> Louw and Nida, 287.

- a. Mankind is used to the idea of making room, provision, setting the table for our lusts
- b. The call of God is to focus our attention on the will of God

## II. Impulsive flesh (3)

### A. The flesh complicates our “best laid plans”

1. Our text uses flesh “neutrally” – “the rest of the time in the flesh,” *i.e.* the rest of your life
2. We who follow Christ have noble ambitions

Mt 8.19 Then a scribe came and said to Him, “Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.”

Lk 9.57 ¶ As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, “I will follow You wherever You go.”

Mt 26.33 But Peter said to Him, “*Even* though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away.”

3. Too often, our ambitions are clouded

Lk 9.61 Another also said, “I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home.”

4. The flesh “negatively” as our fallen human nature gets in the way of our spiritual ambitions

### B. The manifestation of the flesh in the past

1. Peter offers here a “sin list”
  - a. The sin list expands on “the desire of the Gentiles”
  - b. It has the idea of “pursuit” – “carried out” = “the dominating intention and purpose of the pagan world.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Hiebert, *1 Peter*, 260.

c. The list describes a course of life: “having pursued”

1. to move over an area, gener. with a point of departure or destination specified, *go, proceed, travel, ...* 2. *to conduct oneself, live, walk ...* 3. *go to one’s death, die*<sup>6</sup>

d. The verbs put this list in the past

## 2. The desire of Gentiles

Hiebert describes these in more detail, which we won’t do

a. An emphasis is here on the senses: indulging the senses, the essence of sensuality, but in particular public displays of it

“a man may be ἀκάθαρτος [unclean] and hide his sin; he does not become ἀσελγής [sensual], until he shocks public decency”<sup>7</sup>

b. Several terms refer to drinking in various forms

1) Most Christians will agree that drunkenness is forbidden

2) Yet the excesses of drinking are so dangerous that wisdom counsels abstinence

c. The terms also refer to sexual impropriety

d. All these excesses often accompanied the last: abominable idolatries (pagan worship)

“The combination of sexual sin, drinking, and parties apparently was common in the Greco-Roman world, as it is today. ... It is evident that these people lived a dissolute life before their conversion.”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick W. Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

<sup>7</sup> Lightfoot, on Gal 5.20, Edward Gordon Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd, 1946), 211.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, v. 37 (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 203.

### III. Sufficient time

#### A. The past is a motivation for the present

1. The past carries with it a baggage of shame, if not of consequences
2. The time of our past is sufficient (enough) for having done these things
3. In the present, we should want the will of God

#### B. Even if suffering comes as part of the package

“God’s will for believers may at times include suffering for righteousness.”<sup>9</sup>

1. The past has filled up our cup of foolishness
2. Now is the time to fill up our future with faithfulness

#### Conclusion:

“There is no man whom God has converted by His grace who wishes that he had spent more of his life in sin. No doubt it has given him a knowledge of the world, but it is a knowledge of the world that those who have it would be glad to be rid of.”<sup>10</sup>

**Proposition:** Our past should be enough for us to endure suffering for Jesus’ sake in our present.

---

<sup>9</sup> Hiebert, *1 Peter*, 259.

<sup>10</sup> Charles H Spurgeon, *Spurgeon Commentary: 1 Peter*, ed. Elliot Ritzema and Jessi Strong, Spurgeon Commentary Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014), 1 Pt 4.3.