

**Text: 1 Pt 4.8-9**

Last week our text was 1 Pt 4.7

1 Pt 4.7 ¶ The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober *spirit* for the purpose of prayer.

The phrase, “The end of all things is near” governs the next several verses through to the end of v. 11.

Read 1 Pt 4.7-11, text 8-9

We are in the overall context of “how to live if you should find yourselves under persecution” (1 Pt 3.14)

You will recall the notion that “the end of all things is near” is something that is always true in the Christian age.

I gave you a long quote last week from J. H. Newman, where he described the New Testament era as one where time stopped progressing forward and sort of turned to run alongside the edge of “the end of all things,” waiting for the coming Day of the Lord.

I like that way of putting it.

What are we to do in light of the near end of all things?

1. Keep your mind sound and clear of all distractions so you may pray (1 Pt 4.7)
2. And now, keep fervent in your love for one another (1 Pt 4.8-9)

That’s where we are tonight.

**Proposition:** The possibility of persecution heightens the need for intense love, Christian to Christian, as we await the coming Day.

## I. The intensity of the obligation

A. The opening words, “above all,” intensify

1. “the duties ... are of prime importance”<sup>1</sup>
2. No connector, this flows right out of our prayers in v. 7

<sup>1</sup> D. Edmond Hiebert, *1 Peter* (Winona Lake, Ind.: BMH Books, 1997), 271.

3. Persecution would have a natural intensifying element, but this should always be a priority

B. The expression, “keep fervent,” intensifies

“The same expression occurs in non-biblical Greek to describe a horse at full gallop and a runner straining for the tape at the finish line of a race.”<sup>2</sup>

C. The concept of “the love” we are to express

1. First: “the love” – the love we had from God

2. The construction: “the into yourselves love”

a. We are part of one body (*cf.* 1 Cor 12.12, et al)

b. We have a personal interest in the well-being of our own body

c. Loving our brethren is loving ourselves – seems a more intimate connection than the idea of “love one another” (also an NT command)

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Keep fervent in the into yourselves love”

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- Stretch out for it, strain for it

## II. The effect of the practice

A. This love covers a multitude of sins

1. Within normal human relations, sleights will come

a. One’s walk falters, a selfish thought, word, or deed causes hurt

b. Love covers the sleights and forgives the offenses

2. The Lord gives us this very obligation

a. The concluding admonition concerning the Lord’s prayer (Mt 6.14-15)

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Mt 6.14-15 “For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.<sup>15</sup> “But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.”

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<sup>2</sup> Tom Constable, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), 1 Pt 4.8.

- b. The instruction to Peter about forgiving your brother (Mt 18.21-22)

Mt 18.21-22 ¶ Then Peter came and said to Him, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?”<sup>22</sup> Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

3. The pursuit (keep fervent) in this kind of love strengthens spiritual life and builds congregations

“Where love is thin, faults are always thick.”<sup>3</sup>

“When believers lavish love on others, the sins and offenses of others are overlooked.”<sup>4</sup>

B. But note: this is not “covering over” or “hushing up”

1. The church has instructions to deal with unrepentant sin
  - a. Mt 18, “tell it to the church ... let him be to you as a Gentiles and a tax collector” (*i.e.* shunned)
  - b. 1 Cor 5, “deliver such a one to Satan ... not even to eat with such a one”
2. Nevertheless, we are not to hold grudges and refuse forgiveness to the repentant

“Having freely forgiven the sinner who comes to Him in repentance and faith, God demands that the forgiven sinner show the same forgiving attitude toward a fellow believer when he falls into sin.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Charles H Spurgeon, *Spurgeon Commentary: 1 Peter*, ed. Elliot Ritzema and Jessi Strong, Spurgeon Commentary Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014), 1 Pt 4.8.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, v. 37 (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 212–13.

<sup>5</sup> Hiebert, *1 Peter*, 272–73.

### III. The openness of the expression

A. This verse has no verbs... it's just a particle

1. Lit. "hospitable to one another, without murmuring" YLT
2. Most translators turn this into a verbal form to make sense of it
  - a. "Be hospitable" (verb)
  - b. "Being hospitable" (participle)

This verse explains what the fervent love looks like in terms of mutual relationships

B. The need for hospitality in the ancient world

1. Inns were "dens of iniquity"
2. Consequently, in the church, a ministry of hospitality existed
  - a. Strengthened relations between distant churches
  - b. Aided missionary work in providing shelter for traveling church planters
  - c. Aided Christian travelers on business in view of the disreputable reputation of inns
  - d. Aided Christians fleeing persecution

All of these would fulfill the "keeping fervent" in "the into-yourselves love"

3. One commentator didn't think this was the primary application, however
  - a. The phrase address "ordinary social life"<sup>6</sup>
  - b. There was constant interaction with one another
  - c. There was the need to meet in private homes for services
  - d. There was the mutual edification and discipleship that involved meeting with one another

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<sup>6</sup> Edward Gordon Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd, 1946), 218.

- e. I will add: this makes the obligation universal — not just incumbent on those with big houses

The church under pressure needs the strength that mutual interaction provides.

4. Without grumbling: why would they grumble?

- a. They could grow weary in well doing
- b. Those with more wealth might find themselves pressed to provide more hospitality than others

It is natural to be self-oriented and begrudge our things...

“Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another”

**Conclusion:**

**Proposition:** The possibility of persecution heightens the need for intense love, Christian to Christian, as we await the coming Day.