

**Text: 1 Pt 4.10-11**

The launchpad for our text is 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 10-11

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.

We had the perspective of 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.

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. Keep fervent in your love for one another (1 Pt 4.8-9)
3. Tonight, serve one another for the glory of God by speaking and doing according to God’s will (1 Pt 4.10-11)

As I began looking at our text in detail, I was a little shocked — I had forgotten about the volatile issue of “spiritual gifts,” which many take our passage as one of the keys to that teaching.

In doing that, I think they miss out on what the text is saying.

**Proposition:** Living on the edge of eternity reorients our activity from self to service, from “all for me” to “all for God.”

## I. A few words about “spiritual gifts”

### A. The contrast between older and newer commentators

1. Almost to a man the newer commentaries have a line like this: “God has given every Christian at least one gift that he or she can and should share with other believers and in so doing serve them.”<sup>1</sup>
2. The older commentaries just don’t mention this at all

“The rule is that whatever gift, ordinary or extraordinary, whatever power, ability, or capacity of doing good is given to us, we should minister, or do service, with the same *one to another*, accounting ourselves not masters, but only *stewards of the manifold grace*, or the various gifts, of God.”<sup>2</sup>

“Grotius rightly expounds this not only of the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, 1Co 12:4, etc., but also of gifts of the body and estate. These are as well gifts of grace as those. Natural endowments also are included in the expression.”<sup>3</sup>

3. The difference: the intervention of the Charismatic movement

We don’t have enough time to teach this in detail...

### B. The overemphasis on “charismatic gifts” distorts the general teaching on gifts

1. We should distinguish the gift teaching of 1 Cor 12-14 from other “gifts” passages
  - a. Begins with a technical term: “Now concerning spiritual *gifts*”
    - 1) Note “gifts” italicized
    - 2) Lit. “spirituals”

<sup>1</sup> Tom Constable, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), 1 Pt 4.10.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible*, rpt., vol. 6 (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, n.d.), 1030, BibleWorks, v.8.

<sup>3</sup> G. F. C Fronmüller, “The Epistles General of Peter,” in *Lange’s Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, trans. J. Isidor Mombert, rpt., vol. 12 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1960), 78.

- b. Term for “gifts” is in the passage, but is subordinate to this special term
  - c. The gifts of 1 Cor 12-14 are the miraculous gifts
2. Other passages speaking of gifts
- a. Emphasize gifts of service (almost entirely)
  - b. Might not even use the term “gifts” (Eph 4)
3. Term “gift” has no established meaning
- a. Is Paul able to dispense “miraculous gifts” at will?

Rm 1.11 For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established;

- b. Is singleness a “spiritual gift”?

1 Cor 7.7 Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that.

4. Nowhere are we encouraged to analyze and cultivate our gifts; the scripture always points to our attitudes and our actions in service to God.

## II. The emphasis on stewardship (10)

### A. How special are the gifts in 1 Peter?

- 1. The word “special” (NAU) is in italics
- 2. The KJV has “the gift” – “As every man hath received the gift...”
- 3. The text doesn’t have the article as in KJV, but I think that gets to the sense

### B. The gift of salvation is a grace-gift meant for sharing

- 1. We are to put our salvation to work: “*διακονέω*” *diakoneo*
  - a. Same root as *diakonos* – household servant (slave)
  - b. We get the word *deacon* from this root
  - c. “Waiting on tables” (Acts 6)

2. Our manner of service is as a stewardship: a household manager
  - a. Again, a steward would be a slave in a household
  - b. One charged with managing the household affairs, the “economy” of the house
  - c. Here, the good steward manages the “variegated” (“manifold”) grace of God

If you are a believer, God gave you grace, now you give grace, since “The end of all things is near”

### III. The emphasis on humility (11a)

- A. The service is divided according to the Acts 6 division of labour
  1. Speaking
  2. Serving
- B. The way you should speak: as speaking the very words of God
  1. First, you shouldn’t preach your own opinion
  2. Second, you should speak (formal preaching to personal counsel) knowing that you *may only speak* God’s truth, not your own truth
- C. The way you should serve: as by the strength you get from God
  1. There is much to do in the church
  2. There are people to serve
  3. There are needs to meet
  4. We can’t do it in our own strength: more than we can do
  5. We do it in the Lord’s strength

### IV. The objective of our service (11b)

- A. We serve for the glory of God through Jesus Christ
- B. He deserves all the glory and all the power (dominion) forever

It is all for him: he gave us all, we give it all back, since “The end of all things is near”

## Conclusion:

Spurgeon: “Whatever ‘the gift’ is, whether it is money, or talent, or grace, ‘Just as each one has received a gift, use it for serving one another, as good stewards of the varied grace of God.’ God gives much to you that you may give it to others; it is only meant to run through you as through a pipe.”<sup>4</sup>

We are just a conduit of grace!

One more from Spurgeon, on the grace of giving:

“We have known men say, ‘Well, I suppose I must give something, but these claims come terribly often. My purse is always being drawn upon, but I suppose I cannot get out of it without a subscription.’ He gives as if he were parting with his blood. His fingers tremble and linger long over the shilling, which has to be extracted as forcibly as if it were a tooth. One wonders that the Queen’s image is left upon it when it has been held with such pressure.

“But the Lord gives out of the greatness of His heart, without so much as a trace of unwillingness. Even when the boon was His own Son, He freely delivered Him up.”<sup>5</sup>

## To conclude the section:

Since “The end of all things is near” ...

1. Pray
2. Love
3. Serve

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<sup>4</sup> Charles H Spurgeon, *Spurgeon Commentary: 1 Peter*, ed. Elliot Ritzema and Jessi Strong, Spurgeon Commentary Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014), 1 Pt 4.10.

<sup>5</sup> Spurgeon, 1 Pt 4.10.