**1 Peter: Arm Yourselves as Christ Armed Himself**

1 Peter 4:1

**Context**

**1 Peter 4:1-6**—*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,****2****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.****3****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.****4****In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign you;****5****but they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.****6****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.*

Up to this point, Peter has been writing to help these afflicted believers who are facing unjust persecution how to respond well. How they deal with the trials is paramount to their growth and joy in Christ.

**1:6-9**—*In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials,****7****so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;****8****and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,****9****obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.*

**4:14-19**—*If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.****15****Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler;****16****but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.****17****For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?****18****And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner?****19****Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.*

(Cf. **1 Peter 2:19-23; 5:6-10**)

As believers, we ought to be willing to face whatever level of persecution for righteousness sake that may come to us, up to and including death (the ultimate persecution).

Peter tells us to arm ourselves for the conflict. The idea is to “put on as armor” as a soldier prepares for battle.

**John 18:3**—*Judas then, having received the Roman cohort and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, \*came there with lanterns and torches and weapons.*

**2 Corinthians 6:7***—in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left*

Peter helps us have the right perspective when persecution comes.

**HOW TO HAVE THE RIGHT PERSPECTIVE IN PERSECUTION**

1. **Have the Same Attitude as Christ**

***1****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*

1. Therefore…
	* + 1. Looking back at the prior verses in context
			2. Consider the sufferings of Christ
				1. His sin bearing at the cross
				2. His unjust suffering
				3. His greatest triumph in spite of the persecution
			3. The greatest victory was accomplished proving that suffering can lead to victory over the forces of evil
2. *Since Christ has suffered in the flesh*
	1. When Christ suffered in His earthly body, He died

**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*

* 1. The purpose fulfilled the Father’s redemptive plan

**Galatians 3:13**—*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”*

1. *Arm yourselves*
	1. *Arm (*hoplizō*)—to arm, furnish with arms; metaph. Take on the same mind[[1]](#footnote-2)*
	2. A military term referring to a soldier putting on weapons to fight

**Ephesians 6:11**—*Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.*

1. We therefore are equipped with the same purpose
	1. The purpose is to have the same attitude or thought
	2. That purpose is that death produces the greatest victory

**1 Corinthians 15:26***—The last enemy that will be abolished is death.*

**54-55***—But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “Death is swallowed up in victory.****55****O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”*

**2 Timothy 1:10***—but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*

**Revelation 21:4***—and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”*

* 1. Peter himself was martyred under sever persecution

**John 21:18-19**—*Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go.”****19****Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He \*said to him, “Follow Me!”*

* 1. This is a principal that Jesus repeatedly told His disciples

**Luke 9:23***—And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.*

**Matthew 10:38-39***—And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.****39****He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.*

* 1. Paul likewise understood and communicated this truth

**2 Corinthians 4:8-12**—*we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing;****9****persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;****10****always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.****11****For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.****12****So death works in us, but life in you.*

* 1. Many over the centuries have been martyrdom for the sake of righteousness

**Hebrews 11:13-16***—All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.****14****For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own.****15****And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return.****16****But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.*

**35-38***—Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection;****36****and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment.****37****They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated****38****(men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.*

* + 1. Faithful to God no matter the cost
		2. The “cross precedes the crown. The greater the righteous suffering, the greater is the reward.”[[2]](#footnote-3)
			1. The greatest triumph one can experience is death
			2. Why is that the case?
1. Because the outcome is *ceased from sin, v****1***
	1. One is free from sin and in a permanent condition
	2. Glorification—a holy perfection that is free from all sin’s influences and effects

**1 Corinthians 15:42-43**—*So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body;****43****it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.*

**2 Corinthians 5:1***—For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

**Revelation 21:4***—and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”*

* 1. Jesus is our forerunner in that He secured our victory over sin an death

**Mark 16:9-14**—*Now after He had risen early on the first day of the week, He first appeared to Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons.****10****She went and reported to those who had been with Him, while they were mourning and weeping.****11****When they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they refused to believe it.* ***12****After that, He appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking along on their way to the country.****13****They went away and reported it to the others, but they did not believe them either.****14****Afterward He appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at the table; and He reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen.*

(Cf. **Luke 24:26-43**)

**Philippians 3:21**—*who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.*

* + 1. Jesus did so for the joy set before Him

**Hebrews 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.*

* + 1. His death conquered sin forever and achieved a joy that far surpassed the suffering He would endure
	1. If the Christian is armed with the goal of being delivered from sin, and that is accomplished through death, the fearsome threat of death is gone and death even become precious.[[3]](#footnote-4)

**Philippians 1:21**—*For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.*

**2 Timothy 4:18***—The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.*

* 1. The ravaging effects of sin in the life of the believer are no more
		1. The ever present reality of sin in our lives moves us to long for the eternal state where sin is removed
		2. We will be fully purified in its glorious intended outcome

**Romans 7:18***—For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.*

***23-24****—but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.****24****Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?*

**8:20-22***—For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope****21****that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.****22****For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.*

**30***and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.*

**Titus 2:13-14***—looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,****14****who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.*

* + 1. In our resurrected bodies, we will be like Him as He is

**1 Corinthians 15:54-57**—*But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “Death is swallowed up in victory.****55****O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”****56****The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law;****57****but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1. **Have God’s Will in Mind**

***2****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. **Put the Old You Off—no longer former desires**

***3****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.****4****In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign you;****5****but they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.*

1. **Put the New You ON—live in the spirit**

***6****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.*

**Conclusion**

Nothing can steal the victory that is ours in Christ. That is the eternal hope we have and any measure of persecution along the way only shapes us into greater Christ-likeness. There will come a day when we will finally “cease from sin.” Oh what a glorious day that will be!

**2 Corinthians 4:16-18**—*Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.****17****For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,****18****while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

**Source**

Most of the message and notes come from:

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R.C.H. Lenski, The Interpretation of I and II Epistles of Peter, the three Epistles of John, and the Epistle of Jude

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[www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org)

1. Strong’s G3695 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. MacArthur, 225. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Ibid, 226. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)