**1 Peter: Arm Yourselves as Christ Armed Himself, Pt 3**

1 Peter 4:2-6

**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.*

There is no question that our world and culture does not understand the nature of sin. And when it considers the condition and nature of man (anthropology), it does not accept a diagnosis of man’s problems being rooted in sin.

The word itself is offensive. It is redefined and reclassified. It is not an acceptable word. Certainly, it is not an acceptable cause.

There are many things that we may have classified as “sin” or “sinful” are no longer considered as such. “We are far more progressive today in our understanding.”

The world has not only redefined sin but it has removed any personal responsibility for it. They would say that we have become the product of aggressions and wrongs others have inflicted on us. “We are the victims of these things. I am who I am because of the wrongs others have done to me—especially my parents.”

The truth is we live in a vile, wicked, sinful culture. And the heart of man is desperately wicked. But if we have not rightly identified the issue for what it is, and we’ve removed the right terminology and biblical understanding, one will never come to the right conclusion of the consequences of sin.

* There is no need for a Savior if there is no reason to be saved.
* There is no need for a solution if there is no problem.
* We do not need to be redeemed.

The craftiness of the evil one is not lacking. We have an onslaught by the forces of evil to perpetuate this deception. Fortunately, we have the truth of the gospel to confront the lie.

We can understand that the world does not get the biblical framework. The greater problem is the effect of such thinking in the life of the church. The church will minimize sin or capitulate on the redefinitions. We become desensitized to it. Sin is so pervasive in the world around us that we become numb and are no longer outraged by it—the sin all around us, let alone the sin in our lives.

“Christians often imagine themselves to be strong, healthy and holy.  But the way to health is to recognize that we are weak and sick and sinful.” – J.I. Packer

In our text this morning, Peter is giving us a framework on how to think about life. We live in a sin cursed world and we have been saved out of sin and into life. As such, we are to conduct ourselves with a different and true understanding of doing the will of God vs living for ourselves.

Believers have been given a new nature in Christ, which desires to live in righteousness and obedience to God. Admittedly, we struggle to do that consistently. However, in that struggle, we are to arm ourselves as our Savior armed Himself with the same purpose in order to overcome. We need to have the right perspective—especially in the difficult times.

**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. **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*

Notice the contrast in the words “for the lusts of men” and “the will of God.” The term “lusts” is plural, suggesting that unsaved people are controlled by varied and changeable desires. They are tossed to and fro by the fluctuating attractions, attitudes, and fashions of the world. Turning from one fad to another, they never know what they are going to believe next week or next year. They just want to make certain they are “in” with whatever is popular at the moment.[[1]](#footnote-2)

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. There is a general characterization of the nature of lost humanity

***Ephesians 5:3-7***—*But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints;****4****and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.****5****For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.* ***6****Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.****7****Therefore do not be partakers with them*

1. *For the time already past is sufficient for you* to live in an unregenerate state

**Romans 7:5***—For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death.*

* 1. Your former manner of life is done away with
  2. The pattern of sinfulness that once characterized your life is a closed chapter
  3. It is sufficient—more than enough—to have dealt with it
  4. Peter’s original recipients would have had a life full of the desire of the Gentiles (unconverted people)
  5. Those desires/sinful passions are to be put off

**1 Peter 1:18**—*knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers*

1. Their sensuality perused a course
   1. Sensuality—unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence, debauchery[[2]](#footnote-3)
      1. To some, this is overt
      2. Others, it is less obvious

**1 Timothy 5:24**—*The sins of some men are quite evident, going before them to judgment; for others, their sins follow after.*

* 1. Lusts (epithumia)—desire, craving, longing, desire for what is forbidden, lust[[3]](#footnote-4)
     1. These are the sinful passions that drive them
     2. These lusts lead them into such indulgences

**1 Thessalonians 4:4-5***—**that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,****5****not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God.*

**1 Timothy 6:9***—But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.*

**Jude 18***—that they were saying to you, “In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts.”*

* 1. *Drunkenness*—excess of wine[[4]](#footnote-5)
  2. *Carousing*—a nocturnal and riotous procession of half drunken and frolicsome fellows who after supper parade through the streets with torches and music in honour of Bacchus or some other deity, and sing and play before houses of male and female friends; hence used generally of feasts and drinking parties that are protracted till late at night and indulge in revelry[[5]](#footnote-6)
  3. *Drinking parties*—a drinking, carousing[[6]](#footnote-7)
  4. *Abominable idolatries*—contrary to law and justice, prohibited by law, illicit, criminal[[7]](#footnote-8)

1. *They are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation*
   1. Your former friends are shocked that you don’t continue in your former patters
   2. They are outraged and take offense
   3. Why? Because sin is such normal behavior to the unbeliever

**Psalm 64:5**—*They hold fast to themselves an evil purpose; They talk of laying snares secretly; They say, “Who can see them?”*

**John 8:34***—Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.*

**2 Peter 2:14***—having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children*

* 1. The Christian’s life is radically and forever changed at the new birth

**1 Thessalonians 1:9**—*For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God*

* 1. *“The same excesses of dissipation”…or as one commentator said: a euphoric stampede of pleasure seekers[[8]](#footnote-9)*
  2. Christians no longer keep them company in such excesses.[[9]](#footnote-10)

1. *They malign you*
   1. One-time friends become enemies
   2. *Malign (*blasphēmeō)—to speak reproachfully, rail at, revile, calumniate, blaspheme[[10]](#footnote-11)
2. There will be a day of reckoning; they will give an account
3. God will judge the living and the dead

**Romans 3:19**—*Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God*

* 1. The living—those alive when Peter wrote the epistle
  2. The dead—those already dead

***2 Thessalonians 1:6-9***—*For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you,****7****and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire,****8****dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.****9****These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power*

**Revelation 20:11-15**—*Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.****12****And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.****13****And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds.****14****Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.****15****And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

“Those who will be judged are not men who never heard the gospel; they came in full contact with it, saw its power exemplified in their own communities, in the Christians who forsook all heathen ways, who patiently bore the blasphemies heaped on them. Yet these blasphemers go on blaspheming; no wonder they have a terrible account to render to the Judge of the living and the dead.”[[11]](#footnote-12)

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.*

1. The Gospel—Genuine Hope of Eternal Life
   1. Through death, the believer will
      1. Cease from sin
      2. Escape final judgment
      3. Enter into eternity with the Lord
2. *For this purpose, the Gospel has been preached*
   1. The gospel is the message of salvation
   2. The purpose for it to be announced or heralded
3. To those who are dead
   1. Those who had heard and believed the gospel but had died by the time Peter’s writing here
   2. These alive recipients would have remembered those saints—some of whom were martyred
4. Those who died were judged in the flesh as men
   1. They were condemned by men
   2. Men of whom the world was not worthy (Cf. **Hebrews 11:38**)
5. Yet they were triumphantly alive in the spirit
   1. According to the will of God
   2. Receiving the culmination of their faith and the promised reward

**Hebrew 12:23**—*to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect*

* 1. There were questions in the early church that if a believer died before the Lord’s return, would they miss the promised glory

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**—*But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.****14****For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.****15****For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.****16****For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.****17****Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.****18****Therefore comfort one another with these words.*

* 1. Christ suffered and was alive in the spirit and raised from the dead, believers may suffer in the flesh (including death), but will remain alive in the spirit and enter into the promises of God

**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*

It is not the purpose of gospel preaching to exempt the hearers of it from Christ’s judgment but to make clear that we shall be judged as all men are judged. It is, in fact, the gospel’s intent to prepare us for judgment, to meet Christ’s judgment with confident assurance of acquittal.[[12]](#footnote-13)

The preaching of the gospel not only offers men the benefit of ceasing from sin and living differently for the rest of their earthly lives; it also offers them the benefit of escaping judgment and entering into fuller spiritual life after death. Sin must be judged either here or hereafter. Sinners who do not respond to the gospel invitation must face judgment hereafter.[[13]](#footnote-14)

**Conclusion**

There is a confident resolve in the life of the believer that despite the hardships and persecution that may come, we know that He who promised if faithful. He will bless if we remain faithful to the end.

**Revelation 3:21**—*He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.*

**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:

Richard W. DeHaan, Good News for Bad Times: 1 Peter

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

John MacArthur, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1 Peter

John MacArthur, The Memory The Shuns Sin, Part 2, 1 Peter 4:2-6, Nov 19, 1989, gty.org

John MacArthur, Breaking Sin’s Grip, 1 Peter 4:1-5, September 27, 1992, gty.org

Jerome H Smith, The New Treasure of Scripture Knowledge

# Alan M. Stibbs, The First Epistle General of Peter (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries)

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

1. DeHaan, 111. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Strong’s G766 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Strong’s G1939 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Strong’s G3632 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Strong’s G2970 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Strong’s G4224 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Strong’s G111 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. MacArthur, 229. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Stibbs, 150. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Strong’s G987 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Lenski, 185. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. Ibid, 188. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. Stibbs, 151. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)