

## The Book of I Peter Part 14 – I Peter 4:7-18

First Peter chapter 4, verses 7-19, tell us how to wait for the coming of Christ. I don't know about you, but I'm looking forward to seeing my Lord. And as we look at these Scriptures that we've been going through, and especially this last part of chapter 4, we see how that we are to live until He comes for us, until the Second Coming of the Lord. He's coming for us who name Him as Savior before the Second Coming. And I want you to understand that today.

There is no such thing as knowing the exact date when the Lord is coming back to set up the kingdom that He has promised in the Word. We can look at things that go on around us today and compare that with the Scriptures, and we understand that His coming is close.

But how much closer is His coming for the church, for the Christians? In I Thessalonians 4:16 it says, *<sup>16</sup>For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. <sup>17</sup>Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. <sup>18</sup>Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

I'm comforted today to know that I may not have to suffer the death that comes upon so many people. I can be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, when Christ comes back in the clouds to receive me as one of His own and I will be forever with Him. And I say this to you today, if you know Jesus Christ as your Savior, Jesus loves you. He wants you to be living for Him, and you need to be comforted today, knowing that we are going to

be changed in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, when Jesus comes back for His church.

Now, as we look in I Peter chapter 4, we're seeing here in verses 7-19, once again, how to wait for the coming of Christ. This is speaking of His Second Coming, but as a child of God today, as a member of His church and His body, I'm also to look to this as to how I am to wait for the coming of Christ in the clouds when He comes to take me to be with Him forever.

In verses 7-10 of I Peter chapter 4, it says, *<sup>7</sup>But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. <sup>8</sup>And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. <sup>9</sup>Use hospitality one to another without grudging. <sup>10</sup>As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

I see in these verses 7-10 how we should live because the end is near. It talks about being sober. Live soberly. Be seriously watchful in our prayers according to verse 7. We're to watch with prayer. We're to watch based on the facts that we've seen in the Word of God, that we see daily as we study the Word of God. Rational thinking rather than speculation. This means that we look to the Word of God, and it's not something that we think but it's something that we know is going to take place. It's rational, spiritual thinking from the Word of God.

And then we also see in verse 8 here how that we are to love each other with extreme enthusiasm. We're to be excited. We're to help

each other. We're to love one another, and we're to be excited about the coming of our Lord.

And then in verse 9, it says that we're to be hospitable to each other without reluctance. That word "grudging" means reluctance. We're not to have reluctance. We're not to grumble about the things that are coming on and off, but we're to build each other up. Remember, in I Thessalonians chapter 4, it talks about the rapture of the church, and verse 18 says, *Wherefore comfort one another with these words.* We're to comfort each other daily as the coming of the Lord draws nigh.

In verse 10, we're to help or to minister to each other with the gifts God has given to us, and let me put this personal. We're to help each other. You're to help others with the gift that God has given you. It's up to you as a Christian, as a member of the body of Christ, to uplift other people as we see Jesus coming, as we wait for Him.

Verse 11 of I Peter chapter 4 says, *If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

We see in this verse 11 those who speak and those who serve. We're to communicate... speak wisely when speaking for God. We're not to just say something that comes into our minds. We're to think before we speak. We're to bring honor and glory to the Lord, and one way we do that is to communicate or speak wise things. And once again, we speak wisely as we've studied the Word of God and as we study the Word as the Holy Spirit leads and guides us as we pray. Remember, we looked at the prayer up in the earlier part here in verse 7. It talks about watch unto prayer. We're to pray

and we're to ask God for His guidance, and then we're to communicate. We're to speak the Word of God.

Then, we're also to understand that God gives the ability or the gift to help other people. He gives us the ability. It's not on our own. It's not what we do naturally. It's what God gives us. He gives us the gift to be able to speak, and you know that this verse teaches us that God is to receive all the glory for all the things we do through Jesus Christ. It's all of God. It's all of the Lord. It's all of Jesus Christ.

Now, in verses 12-13: *<sup>12</sup>Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: <sup>13</sup>But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.*

Remember, we're looking at how we are to wait for the coming of Christ. These verses 12-13 of I Peter chapter 4 talk about when we're subjected to intense persecution. Verse 12 says that we're not to be surprised; it will happen. And it does happen. And we're not to be surprised about this, because, you remember, our Lord went through persecutions. He was persecuted, and He was persecuted to the point where he went to the cross. He suffered and died and He shed His blood for you and me and for the sins of this world, for those people who live in this world, who have lived. He shed His blood that whosoever would call upon Him to save them that they would be saved because of His death, burial, and resurrection, because of the shedding of His blood. But don't be surprised if you're subjected to persecution.

The first part of verse 13, instead of being surprised, we need to be filled with happiness. We need to count it all joy. Now, once again, it's really hard sometimes to be happy when

you're being persecuted, but the Bible says that we're not being persecuted for ourselves; we're being persecuted for the cause of Christ, and we're to be happy about that.

Also in that verse 13, it teaches us that we... that you have become a personal participant in Christ's sufferings when you are persecuted for Him. The rest of that verse tells us that you... we as Christians... have overwhelming joy when we see Christ. When you see the Lord, you're going to be overwhelmed with joy. Can you imagine seeing our Lord and hearing Him say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." What a joyful time that's going to be, and all the many sufferings that people have gone through on this Earth for the cause of Christ, that will all be passed away and all the memories will be gone of that suffering. We'll be with our Lord. We'll be overwhelmed with joy.

First Peter 4:14 says, *If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.* Verse 14 talks about criticism. Criticized and shamed in the name of Christ, it talks about that. And the spirit of exaltation and the glory of God brings tranquility according to that verse, the spirit of exaltation, glory for the cause of Christ. Those who reproach you are actually speaking evil of Christ. As I've already mentioned, it's because of Christ that you're persecuted, and being reproached for Christ glorifies Him. When you're reproached, it means you're doing something for Him. You're lifting Him up. You're exalting Him, and it glorifies Him if you're being persecuted.

Now, verse 15 of chapter 4 says, *But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.* We're not to kill people for the cause of Christ; we're not to steal; we're not to do

evil, and we're not to talk or be a busybody. You know what a busybody is; that's someone that's constantly spreading rumors and everything. We're not to concern ourselves with other men's matters. We're to concern ourselves with the Lord. This verse 15 is what reasons should a Christian not suffer. A Christian should not be guilty of being a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, a busybody. This is a meddler in other people's matters.

Notice now verse 16: *Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.* Christians who suffer for Christ are not to be ashamed or embarrassed. People who suffer for Christ are to glorify God in suffering. We're to praise God for the suffering that we go through on this earth for the cause of Christ.

And I Peter 4:17 says, *For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?* The judgment of God is now, according to this verse I've just read. Judgment must begin with God's church, with believers. We need to judge ourselves and judgment will come to those who disobey the Gospel of Christ. In other words, we need to judge ourselves as we are acting for the Lord. We're doing things for God to bring honor and glory to His Son Jesus Christ, and don't worry about those people who disobey the Gospel of Christ, because judgment is coming for them as well.

In I Peter 4:18, it says, *And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?* The righteous and the ungodly, according to verse 18. If the justified sinner has been judged, what judgment awaits the unsaved? Romans 5:7 says, *For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.*

God loves you today. If you've never trusted Him as your Savior, you need to do so right now.

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