

I Peter Chapter 4:1-11

I. Background

A. Purpose of Letter — Stand firm in the “true grace of God”.

B. Chapter 1

1. A greeting — that grace would come to us. (1:2)
2. Praise — to God for His grace and mercy in salvation. (1:3,10)
 - i. This grace of salvation is for these last times. (1:5)
 - ii. But there maybe trials first. (1:6)
3. An exhortation — Therefore,... (1:13)
 - i. ...let us prepare our minds
 - ii. ...let us be sober
 - iii. ...let us fix our thoughts on the “true grace of God”
 - iv. ...let us love each other fervently (1:22)

C. Chapter 2-3

1. Prepare your minds with the milk of the Word. (2:2)
2. Be sober as a holy people. (2:5,9)
3. As a holy people live separate lives from the nations. (2:11-12)
 - i. Honor authority. (2:13,18)
 - ii. Submission and love in marriage. (3:1,7)
 - iii. Suffering for doing good. (3:17)
4. Christ is our example. (2:21; 3:18)

II. Chapter 4 — Why and How To Be a Steward of the “True Grace of God”

A. Returning to Christ’s Example (4:1-6)

1. By saying “therefore,” Peter is referring back to his discussion on Christ’s suffering before his parenthetical statements.
2. Because Christ suffered in His flesh, we should share the same purpose or intent to suffer as Him.
 - i. What does it mean to “suffer in the flesh”?

- ii. How does “suffering for doing good” (3:17) “for the will of God” help us to cause sin to cease? (The Greek word for “cease” is causal.)
 - iii. Should we desire or plan to suffer? (“If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also.”)
 - iv. We will suffer because the world does not like that we are not running with them (because we are holy/separate (2:5,9)).
3. The world will react with surprise.
 4. The Purpose of the Good News:
 - i. Possibility 1
 - a. If/when we suffer being judged in the flesh by the world...
 - b. ...we may live *then* by the Spirit when in Heaven.
 - ii. Possibility 2
 - a. We suffered with Christ through His death when He was judged in the flesh...
 - b. ...so that we may live *now* by the Spirit with a holy life.

B. Why Be a Steward? (4:7,11)

1. We should be good stewards of God’s grace...
 - i. ...by being of a sound mind (See 1:13) — Greek refers to soundness of the heart, the seat of the passions and desires, *i.e.* having self-control
 - ii. ...by being sober (See 1:13) — Greek refers to the absence of alcohol. Does this extend beyond that?
2. Why?
 - i. Because the end is near. What is the importance of being sound and sober near the end?
 - ii. So that we can pray. What is the significance of being sound and sober in prayer?
 - iii. So that God may be glorified (as it is His grace in the first place that allows us to be the steward.) (See below and also Jn 13-16)

C. How To Be a Steward (4:8-11)

1. The most important ways to be of a sound mind and sober:
 - i. Love — a forgiving love (See 1:22 and also 1 Co 13)
 - ii. Hospitality
 - a. Related to love
 - b. To be without complaining
 - c. By using our gifts.
 - 1) For each other, not just for ourselves (See 1 Co 12-14)

- 2) Gifts are “little graces”, a part of God’s manifold grace which we collectively are stewards of.
 - i) If the gift is speaking (preaching, teaching, prophecy, *etc.*), the good steward will speak as if speaking the words of God (not his or her own words).
 - ii) if the gift is serving (deaconing, helping others, *etc.*), the good steward will serve from God’s strength (not his or her own).

III. Application

A. Do we see suffering as a help for us to cause our sins to cease?

B. Is the world surprised by our way of life? or do we just fit right in?

C. Do we consider that our talents are gifts of grace from God?

D. Are we good stewards of those talents and gifts?

1. Do we use those talents and gifts to show love and hospitality?
2. Do we stay self-controlled and sober?
3. Do we pray?