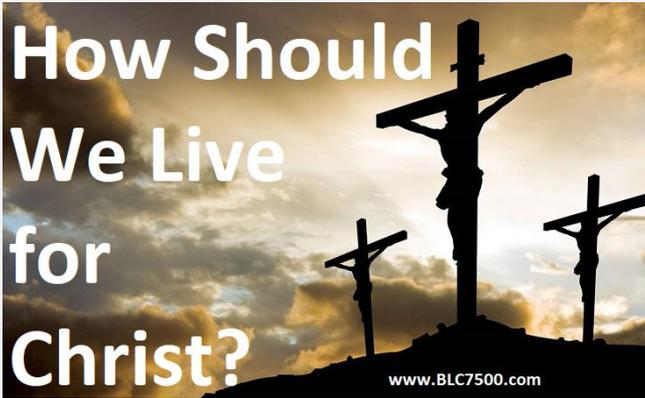


Fifth Sunday of Easter – 2023

Saturday, 5/6 at 4:00 | Sunday, 5/7 at 9:00



Text: 1 Peter 2:11-25 NAS 1995

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: This is part 4 of our six-part series on Peter's first letter.

What are some of the past highlights?

- Through the Christ our eternity will be awesome!
- The troubles of life have God-intended purposes!
- The holy precious blood of Jesus has redeemed us!
- All believers are united together in one holy family!
- God is calling each of us to tell others about Him!

Now, let us learn more about living for Christ:

1. **Be a Life-Changing Witness:** <sup>11</sup> **Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain [to be distant, to be far] from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. <sup>12</sup> Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe *them*, glorify God in the day of visitation. // Our heavenly Father**

is calling us, *citizens of His kingdom*, to change by ♦staying away from all evil and ♦doing all that is excellent. Why? As unbelievers watch us, *the Holy Spirit will be at work within some to convict them and convert them.*

2. **Silence Your Critics:** <sup>13</sup> **Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority,** <sup>14</sup> **or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.** <sup>15</sup> **For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.** // At times we are all tempted to blame someone else. Since believers are favorite targets of unbelievers, *the Lord is telling us to live blame-free lives, which will silence our critics.*
3. **Use Your Freedom to Obey:** <sup>16</sup> **Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God.** <sup>17</sup> **Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.** // Have you ever thought: It's okay to commit this sin, I will just ask God to forgive me! If so, you have used your freedom to cover up your evil. Whether it's ♦skipping church, ♦refusing to tithe, ♦refusing to forgive, ♦etc., the Lord is calling each of us to be sorry, stop the sinning, and honor Him and all people.
4. **Endure Unjust Suffering with Patience:** <sup>18</sup> **Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable.** <sup>19</sup> **For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.** // At times we may experience *unjust suffering* – from our ♦government, ♦employer, ♦family, or ♦neighbor. How should we respond? By

continuing to **obey** and **show respect** – *because the Lord*  
✦is aware, ✦is pleased with such behavior, and ✦will  
eventually deliver us.

## 5. **Follow the Example of the Christ:**

- a. Earned suffering doesn't count: <sup>20</sup> **For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience?** // What credit is there?  
**None!** You did the crime, *so you deserve the time!*
- b. Unfair suffering is different: **But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.** // Whenever we are suffering *unjustly/unfairly*, let us remember: The Lord ✦is aware, ✦is with us, and ✦will help us *at the right time*.
- c. The reason for unfair suffering: <sup>21</sup> **For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,** // How did Jesus suffer unjustly/unfairly?
  - i. He had no sin: <sup>22</sup> **[He] COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH;** // He was innocent, **yet** *His suffering was so intense!*
  - ii. He did not retaliate: <sup>23</sup> **and while being reviled [pummeled with abusive language], He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously;** // Even though Jesus was afflicted with excruciating pain and verbally abused, He ✦did not sin, ✦kept extending forgiveness, and ✦kept leaving all vengeance in the *all-knowing* and *almighty* hands of His Father. By the H.S. who lives in us, *let us do the very same things!*

iii. He kept doing the will of God: <sup>24</sup> **and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.**

1. What happened on the cross? **Every** sin of **every** person of **all** time entered the body of Jesus. Then God the Father inflicted upon Jesus the MOST SEVERE punishment – *the eternal punishment that we all deserved.*
2. Why? So that – **because of God’s love and by the working of the HS** – all might repent and believe. What are the benefits?
  - a. Total forgiveness!
  - b. Spiritual and eternal life!
  - c. Reconciliation with God!
  - d. Membership in God’s family!
  - e. Peace in every circumstance!
  - f. A super-awesome eternity!

6. **Rejoice in Your Good Shepherd:** <sup>25</sup> **For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls. //**  
*We were straying – past tense, **but now** we are living under the love and protection of our Good Shepherd!*

**Let Us Pray:** Dear Jesus! We owe You everything, so, from our gratitude, *help us to gladly apply the contents of this sermon!*

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