

Christian Weirdness is Not an Option

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[0:00] Please take your Bibles and go to 1 Peter 1 Peter chapter 4. We're going to study the first six verses of chapter 4.

If you're visiting with us, the Bible, the black Bible, the chair in front of you, go towards the back and find page 182. 182.

That's where you'll find 1 Peter 4. So I'll read the first six verses.

And then we'll do our study. Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, equip yourselves also with the same intent.

Because the one who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh, no longer for the lust of men, but for the will of God. For the time already passed is sufficient to have carried out the desire of the nations, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousals, drinking parties, and detestable idolatries.

[1:30] And in this, they're surprised. You do not run into the same flood of dissipation with them, and they blaspheme. But they shall give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

For this reason, the gospel has been preached even to those who are dead, that though they are judged in the flesh according to men, they may live in the spirit according to God.

Steve Holmes, an evangelical from the United Kingdom, he said this in a blog post on Wednesday, November 21st, quote, Jonathan Edwards owned at least one slave, and at least once in his life traded in slaves.

I hope we can all agree that it is a grievous sin, slavery, certainly the equal of what is listed in 1 Corinthians 6, verses 9-11.

Slavery is not listed there. He asks, again still quoting him, Is Edwards in hell because he was an unrepentant slave trader?

[2:53] No. He, like me, and like a Christian who affirms same-sex marriage, is saved by faith in Christ, despite all his, my, their errors, end quote.

Andrew Wilson from the Gospel Coalition wrote a response article on the TGC website. In the article, he brings a conclusion to Holmes' view.

Here is Holmes' conclusive view, quote, Our actions ultimately shouldn't prevent us from being regarded as believers, as brothers and sisters. Wilson continues on, concluding Holmes' view.

This is a thoughtful argument, and one with which many evangelicals, especially from a reformed background, will identify. After all, we were all saved before we had produced a single good work, weren't we?

If ethical behavior can disqualify persons from final salvation, then what happens to assurance, or the perseverance of the saints?

[4:17] And if obedience, relationally, sexually, morally, financially, is essential for salvation, then haven't we lost the Gospel? Wilson continues on, The problem is, there are lots of New Testament passages that warn disciples away from behavior that would jeopardize their entry into the kingdom.

Then Andrew Wilson goes on to list saints by our Lord Jesus, Paul, John the Baptist, James, the writer of Hebrews, the Apostle John, and then he says this, quote, our actions can put us at risk of final judgment.

Faith without works is dead, not just sleepy. Sola fide, faith alone, is gloriously, beautifully true, but it's not the only thing to be said.

Wilson says this at the end of his article in the Gospel Coalition, quote, if we start saying that the logic of sola fide means we cannot use the threat of final judgment to warn people, if we're no

longer able to say with Paul that, quote, those who do X, Y, Z will not inherit the kingdom of God, end quote, then we've gone into dubious territory.

To take the most extreme example, if I were a professing Christian who was regularly murdering people, it would do me no good at all to be assured that my salvation wasn't at risk.

[6:04] It absolutely would be, and anyone who loved me would tell me that. As Protestants are fond of saying, we're justified by faith alone, but the faith that justifies is never alone, end quote.

Ethical behavior does indeed put a person's final salvation in jeopardy. It does. We are commanded to live drastically different lives from the world.

If we don't, then we're just like the world and possibly not saved. I'm distraught over our young people and what they're being taught throughout Christendom in reference to ethical behavior and how that doesn't necessarily matter.

Specifically, in reference to same-sex marriage. I'm distraught over what is happening to our youth. So this message is going to touch on that.

And we have to touch on it graciously. We have to touch on it carefully. We're going to see in the passage, by God's grace, be wise when some weirdos in this wicked world, friends, Christian weirdness is not an option.

[7:47] It's not an option. I mean, you're either a Christian or you're not. It's not an option for us. Because when we say Christian, when they call us Christian, it means follower of Christ.

What does that really mean? means, means by God's grace, be wise, when some weirdos in this wicked world, by emulating Christ, leaving sin behind and embracing God's evaluation of us, not man's.

this weirdness is not an option. Because if we call ourselves Christians, it will affect our ethical behavior. It will.

God's spirit changes us. God's arms are wide open to sinners. He says, come, I'm going to change you and transform you to reflect me, but come, I'm open to anyone and everyone.

So we'll affect our ethical behavior. And if we avoid evil, if our ethical behavior is changed, we must be willing to suffer for it.

[9:09] Just like Jesus did. Who did no evil and yet he was condemned by godless men. The righteous one was condemned to die a sinner's death.

But don't forget, God vindicates those who suffer for good, right? Though that's the formula.

Suffering leads to blessing. You suffer for doing what's good, good conduct in Christ.

God will bless you. He will. Jesus came to do the will of the Father, which in essence is this. It's better to do what's right and suffer for it than to do evil.

It's better. So be prepared to suffer because Christ also suffered. if we do what is right and have good conduct in Christ, then we may suffer for it.

Oh, I was going to put that up there too because I said that earlier. Ethical behavior does indeed put a person's final salvation in jeopardy. It does.

[10:17] That's practically a quote from Wilson's article on TGC website. We're commanded to live drastically different lives if we don't just like the world, possibly unsaved.

So be prepared to suffer because Christ suffered. If our Lord suffered, if our Master suffered, what makes us think we won't suffer if we're doing what's good and right?

We may suffer for it. But ethical behavior does indeed put a person's final salvation in jeopardy.

If Jesus suffered for doing the will of the Father, so will we. So will we. I've got three different points for you.

How we're able to be wise when some weirdos in this wicked world emulating Christ leaving sin behind and embracing God's evaluation of us.

[11:31] So we're going to look at those three. First, Peter says, emulate Christ, verse 1.

Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, equip or arm yourselves with the same intent.

This looks back to chapter 3, verse 18. Christ, once for all, suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God.

Jesus suffered on behalf of sinners and the purpose was to bring us to God. Once again here, He's reminding us of the gospel truth. God is holy, righteous.

We're sinners. We should be condemned. And yet He sends Jesus, God the Son, who took on flesh, suffered, died, was resurrected, vindicated by God.

And the call, the response is, repent and trust in Jesus alone. Turn from your sin and trust in Christ and you'll be saved. If you're here today, you don't know Christ, come and repent.

[12:39] Come to Jesus and be saved. There's the gospel. So Peter reminds us of this gospel truth. Since Christ has suffered in the flesh based on the fact that Christ suffered, follow His example.

Not in the sense of suffering as a sacrifice for sin, but in the sense that we may need to suffer for righteousness' sake, for good conduct in Christ.

Since Christ showed His opposition to sin by suffering, so we should say no to temptations and be ready to suffer the results. we should live out righteousness, good conduct in Christ.

We emulate Christ. And that's why He says, as He's done this, arm yourselves or equip yourselves. It's a term used in military context.

A word that is quite appropriate for living in a hostile to the gospel society. And notice He says, equip yourselves with the same purpose or attitude or intention or cognitive dimension of behavior.

[13:59] This is your intention. You're equipping yourselves with the same intention, the same attitude, the same purpose that Christ had. have the same attitude and response to suffering that Christ had.

To suffering. We're called to imitate Christ, not in the sense of suffering for sin, again, but suffering for doing good. So emulate Christ.

Christ. Which also means you leave behind a lifestyle of sin. You leave behind a lifestyle of sin.

And this has three elements to it. I think three, maybe four, three, something like that. Three different elements of what it means to leave behind a lifestyle of sin.

First, suffering for good purges us from sin. He says here the end of verse 1 of chapter 4, the one who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.

[15:10] Who is he talking about here? To whom does this refer? It could refer to Christ, or it could refer to a Christian. It seems like Peter is talking about the believer here, the Christian, not Jesus Christ.

Okay, what does he mean then? Does suffering make us cease from sin? Do we stop sinning when we suffer? Can suffering have a disciplinary function in our lives when it comes to our sin?

Yes, absolutely. When we're called to imitate Christ, put it up with harsh, undeserved treatment because we're doing what's good, it can work as a purging effect on sin in us.

It can. I mean, if we're living out the gospel and yet we suffer, the first thing we should evaluate in our lives is if there is any sin that needs to be dealt with, we should ask ourselves that, yes.

Yet, God may be using our suffering to act as a purifying effect in us. So we have good conduct in Christ, we're suffering for it, it purifies us, so we have more good conduct in Christ.

[16:27] so we emulate Christ, we leave behind a life of sin, and suffering for sin, it brings about a purging effect in us.

Deciding to obey God, even when suffering, may ensue in us a stronger commitment to Christ that we develop a pattern where we're more willing to obey God than desire to avoid suffering, to avoid pain.

That's what He does in us. So we emulate Christ, leave behind a life of sin, that first point, suffering for good purges us from sin. A second way we do this, we live for the will of God.

Notice what he says in verse 2, so as to the purpose of one ceasing from sin, live the rest of the time in the flesh, no longer for the lust of men, but for the will of God.

The purpose of one ceasing from sin is so that we can live in the will of God. It's God's will for us not to live in the lust of men, but in His will.

[17:38] That's God's will, to live in His will, not in the lust of men. It's His will to cease from sin.

The Christian who is armed as such will have a certain way of living life.

life. We live no longer in our earthly existence in the lust of men. Or another way to put it, we don't spend our lives in these lusts.

It's not God's will. Instead of human impulse, we live controlled lives for God. A way of life that conforms to God's will. We're not controlled by the past, but past lifestyle.

He's going to bring that up in just a moment. So do our lives display that we're devoted to doing God's will? Does your life display that you are committed to doing God's will?

And by the way, this is not something we merely do as a one-time thing. This happens many times. many times you're having to adjust yourself to God's will.

[18:54] Adjusting myself to God's will again. Adjusting myself, ceasing from sin, stopping this lifestyle of sin. No, the suffering purges me and I live for the will of God.

It's many times with different degrees of intensity as well. So, suffering for good purges us from sin. We live for the will of God. Another aspect of leaving behind a lifestyle of sin, we don't live a sinful lifestyle anymore.

That's not you. That's not us. Look at verse 3. For the time already passed is sufficient to have carried out the desires of the nations.

sins. The reason we live on God's will, you spent quite long enough time in your futile past life of sin.

[19:58] This is not the first time you said this. Chapter 1, verse 14, he says, as obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lust in your ignorance.

chapter 1, verse 18, knowing that you are not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life, inherited from your forefathers.

It's quite long enough for you to be living like this anymore. That's not you. That time has come to an end.

It's finished, he says. Our past manner of life to achieve the will of the unsaved, the desires of men, is finished.

That time has sufficiently passed to accomplish the will of the unsaved. I'm telling you this in different ways. They used to pursue or immerse themselves in this way of living, this type of lifestyle.

[21:06] this is how we conducted our lives before we were Christians. And then he goes into these different vices, immorality, sensuality, etc., etc.

Now, I'm going to stop here for a moment because as we go through this next part, sensuality, lust, drunkenness, carousal, drinking parties, detestable idolatry, you might say, I didn't live like this.

You might say, I grew up in a Christian home where I heard the gospel all the time. I have two responses for you. Maybe you didn't party like this.

Two responses for you. First, you were still a lost sinner. You just weren't as decomposed. I mean, think about it. Go to a graveyard, cemetery.

You see a person, people gather there, they're having the service. Maybe a person passed away a couple days ago. You see one, they're just laying a person down that's maybe been a week or so.

[22:19] You see fresh dirt on the mound, maybe that's been a couple weeks, two, three, four weeks, so maybe a month. And then you see other ones that have been there for 50 years. They're all dead.

Just one's not as decomposed as the other. You were still a lost sinner. You just weren't as decomposed as someone else.

So that's the first thing to remember. Second, for those of you who said, I grew up in a Christian home where I heard the gospel, consider yourself blessed. Just ask someone who didn't grow up in a Christian home.

You ask someone like that, Nancy, you don't mind? Like Nancy? You ask Nancy, she would say to you, tell me if I'm wrong, I give my right arm to have grown up in a Christian home.

I mean, the blessing, so if you, those of you, young ones, you grew up in a Christian home, go ask someone who did not grow up in a Christian home. They would say to you, you are so blessed.

[23:26] I wish I had that. So consider yourself blessed. So notice he goes into these six vices. Let me go back to our text.

The desire of the Gentiles or the unsaved of the nations. What are they? They pursued or they immersed themselves in a course of sensuality, which is a disregard for any kind of restraint.

Reckless behavior, you can translate it like that, which means sexual immorality. Lust or different passions. And then the next three are connected with drunken festivals, drunkenness, noisy revelry, wild parties.

and then the last one, abominable or detestable idolatry, which was linked with false worship.

These things were characteristic of many social gatherings in Asia Minor during the first century. Sensual living was often connected to idol worship, too. Possibly demonic forces were behind the idolatry, inciting people to even greater sin.

[24:41] Hallucinogens were used to put them in some ecstatic state as well, like alcohol. There was rampant immorality. So now, if we're talking about immorality, you understand what this

includes, right?

If immorality is a lifestyle, not according to God's will, then that also includes homosexuality, and bisexuality, transgender, lesbianism.

This is where we step in things that are daunting for us. Does this mean we are anti-gay?

Absolutely not.

We are pro-people, as one person put it, who want to help them understand what it means to walk according to God's word, right? the Bible, to help those with same-sex attraction.

We want to help them. We want to serve them. Let me be clear. because the Bible is against same-sex marriage, I am against same-sex marriage.

[26:00] And if you're a Christian, you should be against same-sex marriage, because the Bible is against same-sex marriage. Unless you call yourself a Christian and don't believe in the Bible, which I, how does that, I don't understand that.

how does that make sense? And really, to say that, for someone to say, I believe in same-sex marriage is like saying, and I don't mean this in jest at all, is like saying, I believe in round squares. Do you believe in round squares? Same-sex marriage is an oxymoron. according to the Bible, there's no such thing as same-sex marriage.

Marriage is one man and one woman. That's in our doctrinal statement, brothers and sisters. As Southern Baptists, we believe in the Baptist faith and message.

The last article specifies what marriage is between a man and a woman. One man, one woman.

Again, does this mean we're anti-gay?

[27:17] Absolutely not. We're pro-people. We're so pro-people, as a matter of fact, we'll welcome any bisexual, any transgender, any lesbian to come and sit here in this service.

Absolutely we will. Absolutely. It'd be different for them if they want to become a member here.

That'd be different.

but they're welcomed. This is what Peter's addressing. This is the practical implication of what we're talking about though.

If you call yourself a Christian and you're living like these things that he specifies, it is safe to say you may not be a Christian. Christian. How can you call yourself a follower of Jesus if you live your life like this?

If you're a liar, a drunkard, an adulterer, immoral, if you're bisexual? And you have no qualms over that.

[28:24] As I said earlier, and we say this carefully and graciously, ethical behavior does put a person's final salvation in jeopardy.

It does. Because it's clear from the text here in 1 Peter chapter 4. That's not you anymore. We leave behind a life of sin.

And suffering it purges us. We live for God's will. We don't live like that anymore. That's not us. And notice what he does here in verse 4.

He kind of does a little side note here. By the way, when we're talking about this, the unsaved are going to mock you. They're going to mock God and mock you.

He says, in this, in other words, the fact that you've left this life, you've left this life of sin, in this, they're surprised that you don't run with them into the same flood of dissipation.

[29:38] Because we abandoned this pagan, out of control lifestyle, they're astonished that we don't run with them anymore. when a person walks away from this evil kind of lifestyle, unsaved people are like, what?

I didn't want to party anymore. You're boring. You don't run into the same reckless overflow of debauchery.

The idea is the unsaved run and plunge themselves into a torrential stream of uncontrolled indulgence to seek pleasure.

That's how Peter describes it here. An excess of dissipation. Another translation puts it like this, you no longer plunge into the flood of wild and destructive things they do.

love. In the first century, Christians who abstain from these lusts, remember chapter 2, verse 11, abstain from these lusts, from fleshly lusts which wage war against your soul.

[30:52] Christians who did this, they would be seen as haters of humanity, disloyal politically. You're a bigot. You're just plain weird.

Well, I guess some things just don't change, do they? Still like that today. The unsaved are shocked when their friends stop smoking pot, getting hammered and picking up on women or men.

They will quickly notice the change in their lifestyle and your way of thinking. They'll notice that. But if you're doing that just like them, you're no different.

But when you say, I'm not doing this anymore, I'm emulating Christ, they're like, what? Christ who? That's what I say when I'm mad.

And notice the end of verse 4, it says, and they malign you. Literally, the word is blaspheme. The idea is that it results in them slandering God or Christians who no longer join them in this flood of wild living.

[32:07] No doubt, non-participation implies condemnation. So they blaspheme God and then they blaspheme you. You're an idiot. And so is your God.

The unsaved will mock you. Again, this is a little side note he's bringing up here. But the unsaved will give an account. Verse 5, they shall give account to him who's ready to judge the living and the dead.

They will have to give an account. They will be personally responsible to God. Who is the judge? The one ready to do something about it.

What's he going to do? He's going to judge. Whether you're alive when he returns or you're dead, don't matter. They will give an account to him.

This brings us such great comfort especially when you're persecuted for their faith and they blaspheme you. They will have to give an account. They will give an account for doing this.

[33:21] People will be judged whether they're dead or alive at the time of judgment. they will have to answer to God for refusing to obey the gospel. Ah yes, but for those who heard and embraced the gospel, they'll be vindicated by God, ultimately vindicated by God, won't we?

Yes, just like Christ. And we'll enjoy eternal fellowship and relationship with God. That's the ultimate blessing that we receive. love. So he does this, emulate Christ, leave behind a lifestyle of sin, and he tells us what this is all about.

Suffering purges us from sin, we live for the will of God, we're not like that anymore, and this side note, it doesn't say they're going to mock you, but they're going to give an account, and then the third one, emulate Christ, leave behind a life of sin, and then three, embrace God's evaluation of you, not man's.

That's verse six, which is a tough verse to translate. What does he mean? For this reason, the gospel has been preached even to those who are dead, that they are judged in the flesh according to men, and may live in the spirit according to God.

What? What's he talking about? The gospel has been preached to dead people? Okay, so you're supposed to go to cemeteries and preach to dead people? Is that what we're supposed to do?

Okay, next week, after church service, we're going to go to the graveyard. What?

[34:48] His point is going to be this, what matters most is what God thinks, not what people think. Now, you come to this literally for this reason, or this is why, this is why the gospel has been preached, this is why it's been preached to those who are dead.

Well, who's he talking about? There's four different views on this. It's the dead who hear the gospel in hell, a second chance to repent. I don't think so.

It's the souls of Old Testament saints, they're waiting for Christ to be proclaimed to them. No. It's people who are spiritually dead, not physically dead. Well, that's kind of weird.

Why would he change all of a sudden from the first verse in verse 5 and then switch that in verse 6? Fourth, it seems better. These are Christians who heard and believed the gospel during a lifetime, but now they're dead.

It's those who heard the gospel while alive and they responded to it, but they're now dead. The gospel was preached to them, they responded to the gospel, but now they're dead.

[35:59] So dead is literal. It's not figurative. The gospel was preached to those who are now dead, but they were alive at one time and they responded to the gospel. Well, why was the gospel preached to these people?

They're now dead and to those people who are alive. Why is the gospel preached? So that though they're judged in the flesh according to men, they may live in the spirit according to God. Because they responded to the gospel when they were alive, they live according to God in the spirit.

Notice the flesh spirit contrast, just like he did in verse 18. He was put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit. Remember that contrast?

Contrast the physical realm versus the spiritual realm. Put this together with according to men versus according to God. I think in your translation it has as men in the New American Standard. It should actually be according to. It's the same word, kata, in the Greek. According to men, according to God. They're judged one way according to men, they're judged another way according to God.

[37:05] He's contrasting here. One way according to men, physical death. One way according to God, spiritual realm of existence.

So what's he saying? When you put it all together, it seems that the lives of these Christians who've died were evaluated or judged or condemned one way by the unsaved, but another way according to God's standards, spiritual life.

In other words, it's better to be judged according to God's standards instead of by human standards. That's what he's saying. The human standards are ungodly.

They're evil. Though we suffer for good conduct in Christ, we're ultimately vindicated. You will be brought to the spiritual realm of existence when you're evaluated by God.

That's what should matter most to you. You should embrace God's evaluation of you, not people's evaluation. They will evaluate you and they'll blow you off and brush you aside and there's nothing included in that but death.

[38:18] Ah, but with God, his evaluation, there'll be life in the spiritual realm. You'll be vindicated. You will be blessed. Another way for him to say, you will be blessed. That's what he's saying.

What God thinks matters more than what people think. So, if we live a godless lifestyle, we may win the approval of the crowd, but we will come under God's judgment.

How we live our lives displays what we truly believe about the Lord Jesus Christ. ethical behavior does indeed put a person's final salvation in jeopardy.

It does. But, if we live a godly lifestyle, we must embrace the truth that we may suffer for it. It may be negatively evaluated by the unsaved, but God will vindicate us and bless us in the end.

He will. God always keeps his promises. I mean, that's why we're going to take the Lord's Supper. We take the Lord's Supper, we're reminding ourselves of the promise.

[39:35] The promise of the past. He lived, died, rose, our sins are forgiven. We've been brought to God. A promise of the past, but also a promise of the future.

As he's blessed us now in Christ's forgiveness, reconciled to God, he will bless us in the future, Jesus will return. So we get a promise, a promise of the past and a promise of the future.

We have it right now in the present. So when we're thinking about it, God always keeps his promises. He will always vindicate his people. He will always bless us, even as we're suffering for doing what's good, because that's better.

We must prepare ourselves to suffer rather than we're back to a lifestyle we had before conversion, or to a lifestyle that shows no conversion at all to the gospel. That's the temptation.

It's hard to do in our culture. When you're pushed, you're shoved, and you're told you're a bigot, you're a person-hater, or a homophobe.

[40:48] no, I'm a people lover. That's what I am. Our focus should be Christ, his response, and his actions displayed in our lives.

Our lives should demonstrate Christ living in us. This is what Peter's saying. This is his point. Emulate Christ.

Leave behind a lifestyle of sin, and embrace God's evaluation of you, not people. That's what it means to be a Christian. Because our ethical behavior, it matters.

It matters. And Father, thank you. And when our behavior just falls so short of what your word says, we're reminded of forgiveness and grace that comes to us in Christ.

And the grace that you give to us to change us more into your image. So those who deal with lust and greed, it's changed to love and generosity.

[42:04] Those that have same-sex attraction, they have the love of Christ in them, and a love for their brothers and sisters. for those that are liars, you change them so they're speaking truth and love.

And we will remind ourselves in just a few moments, the fact that you bring us to yourself. Oh, keep changing us so, Father.

Change us as we look to the gospel and we partake of these elements together. together. And so take a few moments, if you would, ponder and think, reflect upon what we've seen in God's word. After a few moments, we will do our time of giving, worship in our giving, and we'll sing a song to prepare us even more so for the Lord's Supper, and then we'll talk through some points as we go through communion together.

Think, ponder, reflect upon what we've seen in God's word. Amen.