

AM 1 Peter 4:7-11

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Date: 25 July 2021

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[0 : 0 0] This morning that I, in just a few minutes, will be making my remarks from in the sermon is found in 1 Peter, 1 Peter chapter 4.

And in 1 Peter chapter 4, I'm going to read verses 7 through 11, and I have the ESV, which I believe you do, you have access to as well. And I would encourage you to open up a copy of your scriptures or your smart devices to follow along as I read.

The end of all things is at hand. Therefore, be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.

Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace.

[1 : 1 1] Whoever speaks is one who speaks oracles of God. Whoever serves is one who serves by the strength that God supplies, in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Please join.

Wendy and I had an opportunity yesterday to carry some friends to the Kelvin Grove Art and Museum there in Kelvin Grove West Side of Glasgow.

And we spent a couple of hours there going around to each of the galleries. And one gallery that was particularly interesting to me were Scottish artists, painters and sculptors.

And there was a group called the Glasgow Boys. And it was quite a large group. And they started out painting one way all together.

[2 : 3 0] And it became kind of a signature of the Glasgow Boys, their style of painting. And then as they aged, they began to get more and more diverse. There was one painting called Still Life.

And you can look it up. Don't do that now. But you can look it up. And I want to describe it to you. It was about this size of the plexiglass here. And it was a table.

And it was very darkly shadowed. And on the table was, it looked like a very ornate candlestick. And it was going out.

You could tell it was as if it had been snuffed out. But it wasn't completely out. An ember left. There was also on the table an hourglass. But it was full.

It had not been turned. There was a chest. Or we might call it a small casket. Not funeral casket. But a jewelry casket. That was open.

[3 : 3 3] And jewels were just overflowing from it. There was a violin. But it was broken. There were flowers and leaves.

But they were obviously dead or dying. They were very wilted. There were other things to give away. And give clues as to the meaning of the title.

Still Life. But the biggest thing to give it away was the skull. Now you might have seen classic art.

Particularly Renaissance art. Where there would be usually a philosopher. Or maybe a scientist. An astronomer. An inventor. Someone. Maybe even a politician.

But someone that would be in their study. And there would be a skull. On the table. It's called. A memento mori.

[4 : 39] Memento mori. It's a memento of mortality. And normally it has a phrase under it.

That means. That says. You. Remember. You too. Shall die. As this fellow.

As this skull represents. Someone who has gone before you. All things will end. And terminate. In death.

Now we live in a culture today. A post-Christian. Post-modern culture. That denies death. In fact. If you. If you want to be Debbie Downer at a party.

Bring up death to your neighbor. They will not want to hear it. They will be very very uncomfortable. People. People. Chase plastic surgeons.

[5 : 34] And gyms. And body workouts. And vitamins. And diets. In order to push. Push. Push. Death.

Away. But the philosopher said. We should have a memento mori. In our life. So that every day. We have the contemplation.

Of a reminder. That you too. Shall die. There is a termination. In your life. Even as there is a termination. Of this world.

Peter. Captures that. Here in 1st Peter. If you look. The big idea. Is found in verse 7. The end of all things.

Is at hand. Therefore. Now he was not. The. The. Wendy and I. Have been reading. In our daily devotions. Through. The book of Jeremiah.

[6 : 35] And I think. We're going to have to drop something. Because we've also. Been reading. Through judges. And we're at that point. Where it is not. Pretty. There's loads of death.

Or exile. Or oppression. Or captivity. The end of all things. Is near for them. And Jeremiah. He says. Is this woeful prophet. But Peter's not like Jeremiah.

Yeah. That's why. In preaching to you. This morning. I'm not. A woeful prophet. Saying. Remember. You're going to die.

What I want to do. Is I want to visit that. As Peter does. With the gospel. To say. Because. Because. Therefore. Because.

The end of all things. Is near. Either for us. Or for our world. Every day. It's nearer. Live in light of that.

[7 : 33] And live with hope. And live with joy. And live with service. So. Peter says.

Live. Every day. With the end of days. In sight. In mind. With that mindset.

So every day. That you contemplate. We're one day closer to the end. Does my life reflect that? Does this idea.

Does it. Disturb my complacency? Does it. Even direct my actions. Which is what Peter. Is all about here.

And does it also. Give me a sense of delight. Not dread. You know. If we say. The Lord is near.

[8 : 33] As Christians. As followers of Christ. That should. That should raise. Our hearts. Hopes. And anticipation. Like my granddaughters. She.

My granddaughter. Eleven year old granddaughters. In America. And they've just started. What they call. Year round school. And so. A couple of days ago. She started school again. And she's moving up.

From the lower elementary. To the big girls. Pop. Pop. I'm with the big girls. And so we asked her. We said. You know. Are you. Are you excited? We've been praying.

We've been praying for her. Because. We thought. Maybe she'll be very fearful. In her anticipation. She says. I'm absolutely. Frightened to death. And excited. That I'm going.

So. With a Christian. As we think about. This. It should be. The return of the Lord. Should be something. That is not. Fearful. As much as. Delightful to us.

[9 : 31] So Peter starts out. In verse 7. With that big idea. But he does include. The word. Therefore. Now we were taught. That if you ever. Read the word. Therefore. You have to ask.

The question. What is. The there. For. Therefore. He's saying. There should be. A consequence.

If this is true. And it is. For those. That were not with us. Last time. I preached out of. First Peter 1. And then. First Peter 2. Peter is writing to.

Christians. All over the world. Though they're spread out. He calls them. Exiles. Sojourners. Pilgrims. Because this world. Is no longer. Their world.

And it's primarily. Gentiles. People that did not. Grow up. With the Mosaic law. Or. Judaic worship. So they're. They're leaving.

[10 : 28] And they're learning. How to operate. In this world. Now. With a new world. As their destiny. The promised land. And they're beginning. To be persecuted.

Peter will actually. Die at the. By Nero. Who is the emperor. At this moment. In Rome. He's not quite. The fires haven't taken place. And he's not quite.

Doing the persecution. That will come. But it's starting to. It's starting to play out. And Peter tells them.

At least. Three things. That. Therefore. Because. You want to live. With the end in mind. Every day. There are at least.

Three things. That he wants us. At Dumfries. Free church. To be a part of. Three things. That he wants us. To do.

[11 : 26] And so. For my time. That remains. I just want to be. Very. Very. Practical. But I don't want you. To hear. You'll. You'll dismiss me.

If I'm not careful. You'll dismiss me. As just. American. Favreau. Just. That's. That American pastor. Who came. And preached to us. I want you to hear.

Peter. More importantly. I want you to hear. Peter's master and Lord. Jesus Christ. Behind this. He's saying. As God's people.

And particularly. As God's people. Gathered together. In a community. That we called. The church. So he's not just talking about. One of us today. He's talking about. All of us. And he's not talking about.

Us simply. Individually. But he's talking about. Us corporately. He wants us to do. Three things. First of all. He wants us.

[12 : 22] To pray. Sanelly. Prayer that is. Sane. Second. He wants us. To demonstrate. Love.

That stretches. Love. That stretches. And then thirdly. He wants us. To show. Hospitality.

That glorifies. So. Prayer that is sane. What is our prayer life. Individually. And as a church. Look like. Love that stretches.

How do you love. What does your love look like. Do you have a. As we might call. A tough love. That you can even love. The most difficult people. And he wants us.

To show. He wants us. To have a hospitality. In our community. That actually. Glorifies. Jesus. Glorify means to. It raises him up.

[13 : 21] Above all others. And it makes him big. So that. It's separate. It's separate from. Home entertainment. Entertaining. It's a hospitality.

That points. Beyond the host. And the hostess. It actually points out. A home. Where Jesus is present. So let me look at those.

Three things. Really quickly. And the first. Is going to be. Prayer that is sane. Peter says. Therefore. Be self-controlled. And sober minded.

For the sake of your prayers. Do I need to tell you. I don't think I do. That we live in a. Mad. Mad. Mad. Mad. Mad. Mad world. The world.

Is insane. You know what. Maybe a couple of years ago. I'd have to. Make a case for it. But. Just tune in. To the evening. News. I don't have anything.

[14 : 14] Against the BBC. It's just my source of news. And I just. I. It's getting so. I can't even watch through. A whole news. Cycle. Wendy and I will turn to each other.

And just say. The world's gone crazy. And I'm not talking about the UK. I'm talking about the world. I'm not talking. You know. I know America's nuts. But we're not to be.

Nutty. We're not to be. Insane. Along with them. The word here. For sanity. Means. Literally. You're in your.

Right. Mind. You have a. Right. Perspective. You see. An order. To things. Where others. Are chaotic.

You have. You're not chaotic. You've. You've. You've got stability. Or. As someone. Said. You keep your head. While others.

[15 : 14] Are going mad. And losing theirs. The word. Is used. Elsewhere. In the New Testament. It's not used a lot. But it's used. And it's found. On the lips. On the lips. Of.

Jesus. Well. He would have. Inspired it. But it would have been. The. The gospel writer. Recording. The Gadarean. Demoniac. Being. He came. To his senses.

He. He was. Sitting. At the feet. Of Jesus. In his right mind. And. That.

That would be. Yet another sermon. But there is a connection. There. That Peter would say. Sitting at the feet. Of Jesus. Is where we get. Sanity.

Where we find sanity. Is where we begin. To understand things. I can look at the news. And I can say. Apart. From a savior. Apart.

[16 : 07] From the transforming. Graces. And the work. Of the Holy Spirit. What can I expect? And I would do. The very same thing. So that I don't just. Become cynical.

And judgmental. I actually begin to pity. And even pray. I pray for my neighbor. I pray for my family member. Instead of simply seeing them.

And admitting. Enmity. Against me. And my views. And my opinionated. And judgmentalism. I say. No. I'm a Christian. And God is my father.

And as I've learned. His ways. I understand things now. I can pray for my neighbor. I can pray for my family member. Imagine as a community.

Here at Dumfries. Our prayer meetings. Now. I really want to encourage you. If you don't do this already. To begin to pray for your neighbor.

[17 : 04] And eventually. Even perhaps some of you. Would volunteer. The first name. Of a neighbor. That your whole community. Is praying for.

We're actually seeing people. In our church plant. In Helensboro. Who are actually visiting. The church plant now. And.

I. I'm glad. That nobody said this. But there are people. That we've been praying for. For. Some people. We've been praying for. For. A year or so. People. And I'm.

I'm. I'm. I'm. Just listening. For somebody say. Oh. I know you. And they'll be like. How do you know me? We've been praying you. At prayer. For prayer meeting. Oh. You're that neighbor. And. I know they won't do that.

But. Praying for family members. To either return to church. Or come to church. Or come to faith. That's the kind of saying prayer. That he's talking about here.

[17 : 59] He shows you this. In verse 17. Of chapter 1. 1 Peter 1. 17. He says. And if you call.

On him. As father. And if you're a Christian. We do. Right? Yeah. Who judges impartially. According to each one's deeds.

Conduct yourselves. With fear. Throughout the time. Of your exile. So he's saying. In your prayers. And in your life.

Live like an exile. With a homeland. Where God is your father. But live in fear. Which means worshipful. Become a part of that priesthood.

Of believers. Now. You are. In God's eyes. Let's do the work of priests. By praying for people. And praying for others. Praying for others. And praying. Sanely.

[18 : 57] In our right mind. Secondly. He says. That we're to employ. A love that stretches. Now. Where did I get stretch? He says. In verse 8. Above all. So he's putting this.

Kind of like the apostle Paul. In 1 Corinthians 13. Where he says. Listen. If I've got all of these things. If I even offer my body up. And sacrifice.

By persecution. But I don't have love. Then I don't have anything. So Peter has that same idea. He says. Listen. If our theology. If our knowledge of God.

If our understanding of the scriptures. Is great. And wonderful. But we don't have love. Paul says.

You're just like a gong. Or a clanging cymbal. It's actually an annoyance. But if you have love. And Peter says here. Above everything else.

[19 : 51] Make sure that you're getting this one. Done. Make sure that this is one of those. Therefore. As you think about. Every day. The end of days. He says.

Keep loving one another. Earnestly. It's that word. That Cranfield. In his commentary. He says. That it's like an athlete.

Not at. Exercise. Or a workout. But at the Olympics. Particularly. A runner. Those runners. As they come up to the line.

You'll see them begin to stretch. Every muscle. As if. They can't run any faster. They're running as fast as they can. And every muscle. And every tendon. And every ligament.

But everything about them. Is stretching. And straining. It's strenuous. Xenophon.

[20 : 48] Made a comment. And he said. It's the word. That was often used. About horses. At a full gallop. You're seeing those muscles at work.

So this is not a sentimental. Romantic. Oh I love you. Oh we loved having you over. Oh. Oh we love you. It's not just sentimental. This is a tougher love.

This is more resilient. And then this. In this. Is our witness. The last time I was here. On Sunday evening.

There was a gentleman. I don't know his name. But. I think Jonathan. Invited him to. Come and sit down. And because of two meters. Unfortunately for him.

He was right on the front row. I don't suggest that you. Save the front row. For visitors. Okay. The best seat in the house. As you found out. Is the rear. That impressed me.

[21 : 47] Not that you were trying to impress anyone. But that you welcome anybody. That comes through that door. You welcome them. There's no tribalism.

Elitism. The gospel will not allow it. You have a love. That keeps on loving. You know. I have naturally.

And I think you do too. We've got an expiration date. That we put on certain people. I can love you. And love you. And love you. And trust you. And love you. And love you.

And give to you. And serve you. And everything. But then finally. Enough. You never say thank you. You never return it. In love to me.

In fact. You're probably criticizing me. And you just go and do it again. And I finally say enough. But when you become a Christian.

[22 : 41] That termination date. The time that you would stop loving another person. It's ripped off. This is I would say. It becomes an American Twinkie.

Twinkies have no expiration date. That's why you see them in all these apocalyptic films and everything. You know. Years in the future. They're looking for Twinkies. Because they have no expiration date.

Your love is not going to have an expiration date. Why? Because the Father's love for you does not have an expiration date. I'm going to say something that sounds heretical.

Except you understand the gospel. There is nothing you can do. If you're a believer in Jesus Christ. If you've given your heart to Him.

And asked Him to forgive your sin. There is absolutely nothing you can do. That would ever cause God to stop loving you. Or to love you any less.

[23 : 38] Than He does right now. Nothing. J.I. Packer in his wonderful book. Called Loving God. In talking and defining the big word of.

Jesus was the propitiation of our sin. Big, big word. But J.I. Packer said it just means that God has no more anger left. He has no more judgment left.

Justice has been fulfilled on the cross for you. Completely. And it was all grace. You didn't do anything to earn it. You don't do anything to lose it.

It's all grace. Now the overflow of that. Having our sins covered. Peter says. Having your sins covered.

You now. Can cover other sins. He says that. He says. Since love covers a multitude of sins. And here is. If I were talking to.

[24 : 38] A seminary student. Or a younger preacher. I would say. Here is the gospel. Find the gospel in every text. And it's right here.

Since love. Covers a multitude of sins. Since love. The love of God. As demonstrated in Jesus Christ.

Covers your multitude of sins. Now you cover others. Multitudes of sins. That's the deal. But you can expect. That God never gives us.

A command. He never gives us. He never gives us. An imperative. He never gives you. A prescription.

To go and do. Without giving you a promise. He never gives us. An imperative. Without the indicative. He never gives us. A command. To go and do. Unless he gives us.

[25 : 35] The gospel. He would say often. Go and do. Likewise. As I have washed your feet. Wash their feet. But I washed your feet first.

And he still washes our heart. He still covers our sin. And lastly. Hospitality.

Verse 9. Show hospitality. Show it. So this is a more physical. I mean we can actually.

There are plenty of opportunities. To love people. And to pray for people. That is not visible. It can be. But this is. Hospitality here.

Is very visible. I would tell you. Because I enjoy working. With church plants. I enjoy working. With congregations.

[26 : 36] That have a heart. For discipleship. And evangelism. They want to grow. Their churches. Hospitality today. Is the venue.

Or the avenue. Of evangelism. When Dumfries. Free church. Shows hospitality. Which is not entertaining.

When you show. Provisional kindnesses. To others. Particularly the stranger. Particularly the people. That cannot pay you back.

Either by returning the favor. Inviting you. Or just increasing your roles. With Illuminati. And nice people. But when you show hospitality.

To the least of these. It will grow your church. Think about. The master. Who was going to have a banquet. And then he began to go.

[27 : 33] And Luke 14. He began to invite. Others. And they came up with excuses. And then he said. But my banquet table. Is. The legs are breaking off.

It's bursting. Go out. Go further out. Go to. And he basically begins. To describe. Not only the poor.

But the homeless. Maybe even the ex-felon. Or prisoner. Maybe someone. That's not even Scottish. He looks here.

And he says. You know. There is. A cost. To showing hospitality. That. In this time. That he was writing. They didn't have inns.

They didn't have restaurants. They might. In Rome. And other places. Like that. But where he's writing. To these five churches. In Turkey. Very very.

[28 : 31] Very few inns. The early missionaries. We see this in Acts. Were dependent upon people. Opening up their homes. And for many many days. And to anybody.

That would come. And listen. The apostle Paul speak. To all of those people. And there was some expectation. That you would feed them. And give them lodging. It could be quite burdensome.

What's more. Many of these people. Needed hospitality. Because it might be a woman. Who had come to faith in Christ. And her husband now. Kicks her out. She was a Gentile.

Where is she going to go? Showing hospitality. To people. That because of their faith. Or their. Their new walk with Jesus. They need. Lodging.

Or. Conversation. A place of rest. And so Peter is saying. Show hospitality.

[29 : 29] Show hospitality. Without grumbling. And again. I believe. It's connected. To the gospel. Because. We were the stranger. And he took us in. And he took us back.

Now to do this. You're going to need. Grace. I connect all three of these. Prayer. That is saying. Love that stretches. Hospitality.

That. Points out. Jesus is at work here. You know. Because if you show. This kind of hospitality. Let me just say. People are going to ask.

Why are you doing it? It's very important. Very very important. That you don't take credit for it. Oh. I just do it because. I'm a nice people.

I do it because. I like to cook. I do it because. I just want people to see. How you know. We did this remodel. Of our kitchen. I just wanted to have you. And it's. No. It's not about us.

[30 : 26] And when you make a sacrifice. And it shows some cost. Either your time. Or your provisions. People are asking that question. Why are they. There's something. Why are they.

I can't repay them. I can't. Why are they doing that? It begins to bring glory. To God. In verse 10.

I don't see this as a fourth application. Now go find your gift of the Holy Spirit. Everybody has one.

Peter says. Everybody has one gift in this room. At least one. But it's using your very temperament. And the way that God has wired you.

And the resources you have now. And your certain. Your place in this neighborhood now. Wherever it is. To do these three things. And he says.

[31 : 21] We do it. And we operate like stewards of grace. A steward is not an owner. A steward is someone. That the master has said. I entrust to you.

All of my things. And you are expected. To use them. To use them. Meter them out. And use them wisely. Our master is the Lord Jesus Christ.

He has shown grace upon grace to us. Are we showing. Are we good stewards of that grace? For some of us. It may be encouragement. Verse 11. Speaks the oracles of God.

Some people have applied this. Just to pastor teachers. And ordained leaders in the church. I don't see that. Oracles. Doesn't necessarily mean.

That it's the prophetic gift. It means the word of God. You know. Jesus is heard in our conversation. And in our testimony. But he's also heard in our prayers.

[32 : 16] For our neighbor. Whoever serves. By the strength. That God supplies. That's that love. That stretches. That's that hospitality. That costs you.

But it glorifies. But God supplies. God supplies. There was. I think my.

My. Favorite story. If I were to. Try to capture all three. In an image. Is out of Victor Hugo's.

Les Miserables. Jean Valjean. Is a. Ex. Felon. Newly released. And he has to. Everywhere he goes.

He has to show up. Like a yellow card. And because of that. He's shunned. He doesn't have enough money. To stay in the end. They wouldn't let him stay anyway.

[33 : 14] He's. Knocked on so many doors. And the day is ending. He's been walking. All day. And as he walks by. What would be a police.

You know. Constable's office. With a cell. He asked. Will you let me sleep there. And they said. No. You're an ex-felon. Keep going fella. Keep going. He keeps walking.

And there's the church. He raises his fist. Against the church. There's the water fountain. Of the city.

It's got a. A stone. Work around it. He lays down there. On a stone bench. It's getting night. And he sees a woman.

Leave the church door. She would have been leaving. Evening. Prayers. She approaches him. And she said.

[34 : 17] Are you. What are you doing? And he says. What's it look like I'm doing? I'm getting ready to go to sleep. And she says. You can't sleep outdoors. It's going to get cold. And you must be hungry too.

Go to the inn. He says. I don't have any money for the inn. She gives him. Four pennies. That's all she has. He says. This is not enough money. And she says.

Well. Knock on some of these doors. She's showing a love to him. An encouragement. She doesn't know him. She doesn't quit.

He's trying to. To. Just get her to move on. But coming from that place of prayer. Showing a love. To. To demonstrate mercy to this man. She says. Knock on more doors.

And Jean Valjean says. I've knocked on every door. And she says. Ah. But Monsieur. Have you knocked on that door? And she points to.

[35 : 17] The local priest door. Who's also a bishop. Very humble. Parsonage. Next to the church. He says. No. I've not knocked on that door.

She says. Knock on that door. And you will be. Received. He doesn't believe it.

But he goes. And he knocks on that door. And he is. Received. I won't. Go into any more. But it's a fascinating story.

Because it's through. That kindness. And the hospitality. That is shown to him. Through that. Bishop. That he will come. To a life transforming faith.

In the Lord Jesus Christ. And he will dedicate his life. To praying for others. An enduring. Stretching.

[36 : 13] Costly. Sacrificial love for others. And to show hospitality. To even people that are far away. It's the gospel.

It's my prayer for you. And I hope that you're encouraged. That you will live every day. With the end in mind. And let's get busy. You know. Let's pray for one another.

And pray for our community. Let's look for opportunities. Roll up our sleeves. And I'm going to love you. And look for opportunities. To include others. Through hospitality.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father. I thank you for our time together. In worship. I thank you for our time. In your word. Lord. We ask that you would use your word now. That it would not be simply something that we've learned.

It would be something that we see. Through the very gospel. At work in our life. Your intercession for us Jesus. Your continuing.

[37 : 18] Growing love. In us. And hospitality. Such that you've gone to prepare a place for us.

An eternal home. So Lord. While time remains. May we show that. To others. To your glory. As we pray.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Thank you.