

PETER'S EPISTLES

1 Peter: Living In Conflict With The Culture

XVI. A Godly Ministry In An Apostate Time

(1 Peter 4:7-11)

I. Introduction

- A. Several believers in different states have reported on the increasing difficulty they face in living in accord with Bible truth since doing so conflicts with the godless world's deteriorating culture around them.
- B. "First Peter was written to Christians . . . whose stand for Jesus Christ made them aliens and strangers in the midst of a pagan society" (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 837), so we study 1 Peter for insight and edification.
- C. 1 Peter 4:7-11 presents Peter's admonitions on a godly ministry in an apostate time, an important topic in view of all the pressures such a time presents believers in ministry, and we view it for our insight and edification:

II. A Godly Ministry In An Apostate Time, 1 Peter 4:7-11.

- A. Peter introduced his 1 Peter 4:7-11 section on sustaining a godly ministry in an apostate time with the statement that the end of all things "draws near," *eggiken*, the same form of the word that is used in James 5:8 to refer to Christ's Second Coming, 1 Peter 4:7a; *Ibid.*, 853; U. B. S. Greek New Testament, 1966, p. 800.
- B. Since Peter was writing to believers who were facing a degree of persecution with its resulting trials, and he also focused on the Second Coming of Christ, 1 Peter 4:7b-11 summarizes the kind of ministry amid apostasy trials and their effects on believers that is needed for those in ministry to stay upright with God (as follows):
 1. A godly ministry in an apostate time requires **vigilance** with one's **walk**, 1 Peter 4:7b:
 - a. Peter called his readers to be "clear-minded" (*sophronesate*) and "self-controlled" (*nepsate*) that they might be able to pray effectively amid the duress of ministering in an apostate era, *Ibid.*
 - b. This call is important because duress can tempt us to think unrealistically and lose control of our emotions.
 - c. We need to be able to pray effectively in such times of duress, what requires objectivity and self-control versus becoming unsettled by trials that disrupt such self-governance.
 2. A godly ministry in an apostate time requires **forbearance** in one's **relationships**, 1 Peter 4:8-9:
 - a. Believers under duress can fail to pay close attention to Scripture and their walk with the Lord, falling prey to impatience, intolerance and harshness in relating to fellow believers who similarly struggle with stress.
 - b. To counter this destructive tendency, Peter called us to have a "strained" or "stretched" (*ektene*) love for each other, for that kind of love "hides" (*kaluptei*) or covers a multitude of sins, 1 Peter 4:8; *Ibid.* Peter was not teaching that sin should not be addressed, but that straining to be forbearing with the wrongs committed by others helps to edify in view of the fact that duress caused by apostasy often elicits a greater production of sins that sprout from irritation and emotional fatigue, *Ibid.*; *Ibid.*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T.
 - c. Peter added that we should be hospitable without grumbling especially in times of duress when believers are often in need of housing and food assistance, 1 Peter 4:9; *Ibid.*, Bible Know. Com., N. T.
 3. A godly ministry in an apostate time requires **accuracy** in one's **ministry functions**, 1 Peter 4:10-11:
 - a. Peter noted that every believer has received a spiritual enabling for supernatural Christian service, 1 Peter 4:10a, so each of us should minister that gift as a good steward of the manifold grace of God, a steward being accountable to God to dole out the fruits of that gift to edify fellow believers, 1 Peter 4:10b. Fellow believers under duress greatly need the supernatural edification of every other believer, so every spiritually gifted believer must of necessity minister his gift for the benefit of others in the body of Christ.
 - b. Peter then mentioned the two major classes of gifts, those of *speaking* and those of *servicing*, and he gave directions for both gift classes, demonstrating the need for Biblical accuracy in their use, 1 Peter 4:11:
 - i. Those with speaking gifts must speak as God's "sayings" (*logia*, *Ibid.*; T. D. N. T., v. IV, p. 139-141), that is, preach and teach **Scripture** that *truly* disciplines believers under duress, 1 Peter 4:11a.
 - ii. Those with serving gifts must minister with the spiritual "strength" (*ischuos*, *Ibid.*; *Ibid.*, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 854) God provides, the Holy Spirit's power (cf. Gal. 5:16), 1 Peter 4:11b.
 - iii. In this way, not only will much needed edification occur, but God alone will be glorified through Jesus Christ because of the truly effective results of the **accurate** use of such gifts, 1 Peter 4:11c.

Lesson: *In apostate times with the Church under duress, we must be vigilant in our walk, forbearing in our relationships and accurate in our ministry functions for the divinely effective edification of the body of Christ.*

Application: *May we heed Peter's directives for effective, necessary ministries in an apostate era.*