

Sermon: Living for God

Text: 1 Peter 4:1-11

Discussion Questions:

The NIV translation of 1 Peter 4:1 states: *“Therefore, since Christ suffered in His body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin.”*

The word that seems to jump off the page in this verse is the word **“attitude.”**

We often—in our current cultural use—think of the word in a bit of a negative light. As in, “Oh my goodness! Did you just hear how my middle school daughter gave me nothin’ but attitude!”

But the primary definition of attitude is: ***A settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, typically one that is reflected in a person's behavior.*** In other words...what we think about something determines how we act.

That’s a powerful thing when you think about it. Our actions are DETERMINED by our attitude. And our attitude is determined by...what we CHOOSE to think or feel.

My father (a pastor for 60 years), passed away six years ago. Following his death, I was going through his ministry files. One particular file held some of his more cherished papers. In the file was a quote from Charles Swindoll. Here’s the quote:

“The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company...a church...a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past...we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude...I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you...we are in charge of our attitudes.”

Take some time to discuss/consider this quote. Do you agree? Have you ever considered how important your attitude is? What are some of the things that effect your attitude? What can you do EVERY DAY to improve your attitude—and thus change your behavior?

Examination:

- Read **1 Peter 4:1-6**
 - We just discussed the vital importance of our attitude. What, specifically, is the attitude that Peter is telling us that we ought to have?
 - What do you think it means that physical suffering ought to be our settled way of thinking and feeling about our lives?
 - How does this impact the way we respond to suffering when it comes?

- What are ways that Christians experience suffering around the world?
 - What are ways that Christians experience suffering in the U.S.?
 - Do you think this suffering involves various diseases and ailments such as cancer or heart disease?
 - Most of the time—our immediate response to suffering is one of questioning, or even shock. We often think, “How could this be happening to me???” Or “What did I do to deserve this?” How might this attitude that Peter is calling us to adopt change the way we view or respond to suffering when it comes?
 - What do you think it means to “arm yourself” with an attitude?
 - Who is our example when it comes to having this attitude?
 - What is the ultimate result of the suffering a Christian might face? How does physical suffering bring an end to sin in our lives (see v. 2)?
 - How can we expect “the world” to respond to us when we stop “doing what pagans choose to do”? (v. 4)
 - According to verse 6, why do we preach the Gospel? What are the “human standards” that are used to judge the body—and the “Godly standards” that apply to our spirit?
- **Read 1 Peter 4:7-11**
 - What do you think Peter means when he states that “the end of all things is near”?
 - Might a “translation” of this verse be—“Your life is going to be over sooner than you think!”? Do you believe that? What if someone told you that you only had one month to live—how would it change what you did? Is living each day as if it were our last an “attitude” that God wants us to have?
 - According to the second half of verse 7, what should be the result of a “short” view of life?
 - How does love “cover” a multitude of sins? (v. 8)
 - Why do you think Peter felt the need to add “without grumbling” to his exhortation to offer hospitality? (v. 9)
 - Imagine if 1 Peter 4:10 were your LIFE VERSE! Seriously...what if you made this verse the guiding truth of your life. How would living this verse out change the way you lived?
 - What are the “gifts” that Peter is talking about?
 - How many Christians have gifts? What percentage of these Christians are using these gifts?
 - What is the purpose of these gifts?
 - What is a steward? Why is this an important aspect of this verse?
 - What are the various forms of God’s grace?
 - How many of you are willing to memorize this verse, and claim it as your life verse—spending the rest of your life seeking to understand what it means, and then living it out every day?
 - How does verse 11 remind us of the Upper Story?

Application:

Even if you’re not ready to adopt 1 Peter 4:10 as your life verse—what are some ways you can apply this verse to your life in this coming week?