

Cornerstone Church

March 26, 2017

**Sermon Series: Practicing Our Readiness Drills for  
Christ's Return - Seeking God's Guidance from 1st and  
2nd Peter**

Today's Sermon: The Eternal Benefits of Temporary  
Suffering.

Today's Passage: 1 Peter 4:1-6

Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does. (ESV)

Introduction:

Main Point: If we value Jesus enough to suffer for Him and for His glory we will have extricated ourselves from the harmful effects of fleshly desires and will be ready to face God with a clean conscience on Judgment Day. This is a BIG DEAL.

Review

**1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, (ESV)**

- The main reason we turn our backs on our former way of life, with all of its disgusting behaviors, is because Jesus was willing to pay the heaviest price of all to rescue us

from our rebellious wickedness.

**Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh**

- The depth of my devotion to Jesus is equivalent to the degree of appreciation I have for His sacrifice for me.

**Philippians 3:12 Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. (ESV)**

- But, if we arm ourselves with the same thinking as Jesus had, we can find ourselves completely victorious over our fleshly desires that wage war against our souls.

Peter says, **"arm yourselves with the same way of thinking"**

**Hebrews 12:1-2 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. (ESV)**

- How do we arm ourselves with the same kind of thinking as Jesus? With thoughts and convictions such as these:
  - How is the smile of God a better reward than greed, lust, pride, gossip, anger, and hatred?
  - How is walking with Jesus a better reward now than any of the above?
  - How is hearing God's voice and acting on His will and seeing the power of God accomplish supernatural things in my life better than all of the above?
- We conquer our fleshly sinful desires by choosing to suffer for the greater good. Peter says, **"for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God."**
- Here's how this works:
  - If your boss says "I can submit your name for a promotion if you would just stop letting it be known that your Christian principles are more important than the

corners we are cutting to make a profit. By turning down the offer you are saying "No" to making money king instead of Jesus as King you have ceased from sin. Or,

- When a partner says "Let's be man and wife without the marriage license to save money on taxes" and you turn down the offer, you are ceasing to give in to the lure of trusting in money instead of trusting in God. You have ceased from sin. Or,
  - It's hours before a term paper is due and you are afraid that if you don't plagiarize someone else's paper you will get a "D" instead of an "A" and your GPA will go down and your chances of getting into the better school is at risk, but instead of cheating you stay up all night, get a poorer grade and leave the results to God. You have suffered the just consequences and said "No" to the sin of pride, people's opinions, your plans etc. You have ceased from sin.
  - The more a person pays the cost of these choices the easier it becomes to trust God and realize that shortcuts and compromise are far too costly a price. These people have ceased from sin.
- But, some might argue that sin is better than obeying Jesus. Peter would say, **"For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry."**

In other words, no amount of sinning is too little. If you hunger for the excesses of immorality that used to be your life, you are indicating those vices are more important to you than obeying God.

Why are some people so inclined to go back? It is because they don't want to suffer the rebukes of their friends and colleagues just as Peter knew would happen when he said, **"With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you;"**

- But, as Peter reminds them, the scorn and ridicule of colleagues going to hell is far less painful to endure than the judgment of God. Peter says, **but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.**

Lest we think that mockers will never be judged for their harassment of believers, Peter reminds us that if they don't get judged in the here and now, they most certainly will be judged in the next life, and it won't be pretty. And,

Don't worry about getting justice, God will take care of that on His own.

- Finally, the mockers may say to us that we are fools for thinking there is an afterlife of reward and pleasure for those who obey God and a life of torment for those who don't. To reassure us they are wrong, Peter says, **"For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are (now) dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does."**

This reassures us that our fellow believers who trusted in these truths when they accepted the gospel are now alive in the spirit enjoying the pleasures of heaven.

## Application

You will face a choice this week to compromise (just a little) or to remain totally obedient to Jesus. Commit now to start each day by saying, "Jesus, you are worth it all. Give me your righteousness when tempted by Satan this coming week."