

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

Being Holy Means Forsaking the World

I Peter 4:1-11

¹ Have you ever asked someone “Where are you with the Lord?” to have them answer back, “Oh, we go to the ‘such and such’ church”. That answer usually implies this. They live their lives pretty much like everybody else. On Sunday mornings, they take God off His shelf in their lives, play with Him for a couple hours and then place Him back on that shelf where He belongs. Then, they continue to live their lives pretty much in the world like they always have. Because of this, they are Christians. Right? So, let’s get off this religious stuff and change the subject.

But the Bible says, particularly in this passage, that being holy means forsaking the world! ² The Lord said, **No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.** ¹ Being a Christian means committing your life to Jesus as Lord. You can’t

¹ Matthew 6:24.

commit yourself to Jesus as Lord without changing your life to conform to His will! ³

I. Is a Definite Choice Necessary? - v1-2

The first question, then, to ask, answered in these first two verses becomes, Is a definite choice necessary? ⁴

If you don't make a definite choice, you are a hypocrite. ⁵ The word hypocrite ² in the original language, literally means "one who answers back". This word was used for an actor on stage dialoging with another actor. He would wear a mask. During Greek plays there would normally be more parts than actors to play them. An actor would play a part, go backstage, change his mask and then enter as a different character. This is why, today, the symbol for the theater is a mask. ⁶

Hypocrites try to live in both orientations. They join the church, profess the faith but continue to live a sin-

² ὑποκριτής.

oriented life. They try to benefit from both orientations by planting a foot in each arena; Satan's camp (the world) and the Lord's camp (the Kingdom of God). But being holy means making a definite choice for Him. ⁷

Verse 1 says, **Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.** A decision for the Lord may be a decision to suffer for Him! ⁸ The Lord gave us His example. **To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.** ^{3 9}

He suffered ridicule. Luke, Chapter 23, verse 35, **The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One."** ¹⁰

³ | Peter 2:21.

He suffered torture. Pilate then released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified. ⁴ ¹¹ Then, He suffered death! ⁵ ¹²

When you suffer for the Lord by suffering for doing good, ⁶ it's a symbol that you have forsaken the world, the sin-oriented life. ¹³

II. What Do You Mean by the Sin Oriented Life? - v3-6

The next question to be asked, then, is what do you mean by the sin-oriented life? ¹⁴

Let me explain to you the concept of “sin” in First John. Throughout this epistle "sin", in the original language, is in the present tense. In English, the present tense has to do with time but in this language, it has to do more with type of action. In First John, sin

⁴ Matthew 27:26.

⁵ Luke 24:20.

⁶ I Peter 3:17.

isn't just committed once, it is a continuing thing. It continues happening or happens repeatedly. The concept in First John a continuing sin is a sin habit, the sin addiction, the sin-oriented life! ¹⁵

With this concept in mind, let's look at verses 3 through 6, **For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do — living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you. But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to men in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit. This describes the sin-oriented life.** ¹⁶

This stems from evil human desires. Verse 2 says, **As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for**

evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. ¹⁷

The word desire ⁷ means lust, a longing for what is forbidden. ¹⁸ Verse 3 ⁸ informs us that this is what pagans (the world) choose to do. The way of the world is the human way, our natural bent, our sinful inclination. ¹⁹

Verse 3 goes on to describe of what the sin-oriented life might consist. This is a list of some of the components, . . . Living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. I like to call this the Illicit List, consisting of personal garbage and social garbage. ²⁰

Let's look at the personal garbage list first. ²¹ It starts off with debauchery ⁹. That's a big 50 cent word the King James Version translates "lasciviousness". That really helps us, doesn't it? I haven't known of anyone

⁷ ἐπιθυμία.

⁸ v3 - For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do.

⁹ ἀσέλγεια.

who didn't have to go to the dictionary to find both of these words! The word can mean drunkenness but implies excesses of all kinds. The idea is having no self restraint; just letting it all go. ²²

Word two in the personal garbage list is **lust**. It's the same word as "desires" in verse 2; a longing or desire for what is forbidden. ²³

Then, there's **drunkenness** ¹⁰ which means, literally, the overindulgence of wine. ²⁴

Then, verse 3 continues with a **list of social garbage**. ²⁵

The first of this list is the word **orgies** ¹¹ which means a common village festival. But the implication was merry making to the extreme. You can get so drunk that your inhibitions wear down to the point you will agree with or go along with anything; the mob thinking state. ²⁶ The list finishes with **carousing** ¹², the

¹⁰ οἰνοφλυγία.

¹¹ κῶμος.

¹² Πότος.

common word for a drinking bout, ²⁷ and **detestable idolatry** ¹³ which was a phrase meaning lawless image worship. ²⁸ This is a self-centered lifestyle; one that focuses on self gratification only.

Does this type of living look familiar to you? This is the life of the world. This is the sin-oriented life. ²⁹

III. What Do You Mean by the God Oriented Life? - v7-11

In contrast, the rest of this scripture, verses 7 through 11, describes the God oriented life. ³⁰ Remember, again, verse 2. It's staying or living within the will of God. ¹⁴ This is what is meant when the Bible talks about being "filled with the Spirit" or being Spirit controlled.

¹³ ἀθεμίτοις εἰδωλολατρίαις.

¹⁴ v2 - As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.

There is a difference between being indwelt with the Holy Spirit and being filled with the Spirit. ³¹ When you genuinely repent of your sin-oriented life and are baptized, you are forgiven by God and His Holy Spirit indwells you. ¹⁵ Every genuine Christian is indwelt with God's Spirit. ³² When God's Word tells you to be filled with the Holy Spirit ¹⁶ it is not implying to receive more of His Spirit than you already have. The idea is to allow the Holy Spirit to control your life similar to the way wine controls your life when you're drunk. God's will should call the shots in your life rather than allowing the world-oriented lifestyle to do it.

One of my current heroes, the late Dr. Bill Bright, the founder of Campus Crusade, illustrated this concept in what he called **Spiritual Breathing**. ³³ You exhale by

¹⁵ Acts 2:38 - Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁶ Ephesians 5:18 - Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.

repentantly confessing your sins to the Lord ¹⁷ ³⁴ and you inhale by asking the Lord to fill that empty place in your heart, vacated by the sin, with His Holy Spirit ¹⁸. Doing this routinely by faith helps you to be more consistently filled with the Holy Spirit. ³⁵

This passage also gives us some signs that you are experiencing the God oriented life. ³⁶

Verse 7 points out **prayer**. **Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray**. ³⁷ This is accomplished by being clear minded ¹⁹. This word literally means “a wise mind”. It’s being of a sound mind and seeing things in proper perspective. We get our English word “sophisticated” from this word. ³⁸ This is also accomplished by being self controlled ²⁰

¹⁷ I John 1:9 - If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

¹⁸ Luke 11:13 - . . . how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!

¹⁹ Σωφρονέω.

²⁰ Νήφω.

which means to be sober, abstaining from wine. In this passage it probably means to be responsible. ³⁹

Verse 8 says another sign is **love**. **Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.** ⁴⁰ Love needs to be deep ²¹, intense and consistent. ⁴¹ It covers a multitude of sins because if you really love someone it's easier to forgive them. ²² ⁴² The more you live the life of love for others, the more mercy God says He will show you. ²³ ⁴³

Verse 9 talks about another sign being **hospitality**. ²⁴ **Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.** Literally, this means loving strangers. So, go out of your way to make them feel special. ⁴⁴ “One another” means brothers and sisters in the Lord. ⁴⁵ It needs to be done without grumbling. “Is it my turn to clean the church kitchen again!” ⁴⁶

²¹ ἐκτενής.

²² Proverbs 10:12 - Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs.

²³ Matthew 5:7 - Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

²⁴ φιλόξενος.

The final sign found here is in verse 10, **service**. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. This is administering God's grace. You discover what your gift of service is and then you use it faithfully. ⁴⁷ Your reason for Christian service, according to verse 11, ²⁵ is to honor God! ⁴⁸

Being in Christ means being free from the world! When you were baptized, you died to the old life so that you could be resurrected into a new one. Seize your new life now and live it!

<http://biblelifemessages.org>

²⁵ v11 - If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.