



INTRODUCTION:

- For the past few weeks we've been looking at End Times prophecy from Isaiah's perspective.
- We began by looking at the timeline of prophecy and we saw that we are in a holding pattern as we wait for a world leader to emerge on the scene who will strike a 7 year peace treaty in the middle east
- We then saw that Israel is one of the key components in this Biblical Timeline because the generation that saw Israel become a nation would witness the Rapture of the Church
- We looked at the signs of the times and the things that need to happen before the Rapture of the Church takes place
- We looked at the Middle East and the way the nations are aligning themselves against Israel according to Biblical Prophecy
- We even looked at the signs in the heavens and how the unusual astronomical events in our lifetime signify that God is causing us to look up towards the heavens... something is about to happen
- We looked at the differences between the Rapture of the Church and the Second coming
- How in the Rapture, Jesus will come for His Church, but in the Second Coming Jesus will return with His Church
- We talked about the Day when God will restore His relationship with Israel and once and for all defeat all of Israel's enemies
- We then talked about the Millennial Reign of Christ where Jesus will reign from Jerusalem and for 1000 years
- Isaiah 2 describes this as a time of world peace
- During this time there will be no death, no sickness, no disease
- Righteousness, Peace and Joy will be the norm

But the question I want to ask today is this...

- Knowing that Jesus could return at any moment... How are we to live?
- Are we to freak out? Stop making plans for the future?
- Sell everything, sit on your roof and wait for the rapture?
- No... we have much to do as we prepare for the Lord's return
- For our text we are going to look at 1 Peter 4
- And there are 4 distinct mandates that Peter says must characterize the life of every believer in the last days
- These are not suggestions or things we should consider



- These are ways of living that are necessary to navigate the times in which we live

For those taking notes these 4 distinctives are

- A Life of Prayer
- A Fervent Love
- A Loving Heart
- A Readiness To Serve

THE FIRST DISTINCTIVE IS A LIFE OF PRAYER

1 Peter 4:7 (NKJV)

⁷ But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.

- In our culture, when we think of something serious we think solemn or thoughtful, somber or humorless
- But the word Peter uses is better translated sober minded
- It means to be of sound mind, to be in one's right mind, to exercise self control, to think of one's self soberly, to curb one's passion

When you're in the middle of a crisis... who do you turn to?

- You turn to the person who is calm, level headed
- Peter is saying to us... the end of all things is at hand... don't loose your mind... don't freak out... but pray with a level head
- How do you pray with a level head? Well... here's one thing to keep in mind... we know how the story ends!
- We know that Jesus wins... ISIS doesn't win, Ebola doesn't win, Jesus wins... so we can pray not out of desperation, but with confidence
- We are not to get caught up with fear or anxiety over the days that we live in because we know our future is secure

Not only are we to be serious, but watchful in our prayers

- The word watchful means to be free from every form of mental and spiritual drunkenness, to be free from excess, rashness or confusion
- It means to exercise self-restraint or self-control for your own good

We live in troubled times, we're in the middle of a spiritual battle



- And when you're in the middle of battle, you need to keep your wits about you at all times
- A clouded mind on the battle field can mean the difference between life and death
- That is why I am most concerned about America's preoccupation with self medication
- It doesn't matter if it's medical marijuana or alcohol or prescription meds
- We are living in the last days and this is not the time to be checking out of reality... we need to keep our heads in the game

Paul writing to the Church in Thessalonica writes...

1 Thessalonians 5:6–8 (NKJV)

⁶ Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober.

⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. ⁸ But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.

Peter Says Be Serious And Watchful For The Sake Of Prayer

THE SECOND DISTINCTIVE IS A FERVENT LOVE

1 Peter 4:8 (NKJV)

⁸ And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "*love will cover a multitude of sins.*"

The word fervent means to be eager and Peter uses it in reference to showing God's love...

- Above all things to be eager to show God's agape love for one another
- For God's agape love will cover a multitude of sins
- Now is not a time to be judgmental and condemning, but loving

What does Peter means when he says God's love covers...

- The word cover means to cloke or to veil and it's the idea of covering ones nakedness so that they are not embarrassed or providing shelter, a place to deal matters privately
- It doesn't mean that sin doesn't get dealt with
- It means that sin gets dealt with in a way that doesn't bring shame on the person who has sinned
- BUT another way to interpret cover is to forgive



Peter is quoting Proverbs 10:12

Proverbs 10:12 (NKJV)

¹² Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all sins.

- The Hebrew word for cover carries with it the idea of forgiveness
- Forgiveness is willing to keep an offense hidden for the sake of love
- Hatred wants to make known, to challenge... but love forgives

I love this quote I read on facebook by Karina Rosales

The inability to forgive is such a poison to the soul. It keeps us trapped in bondage and doesn't allow us the freedom to love. It gives us false power in controlling our relationships by keeping track of all the wrongs the other person did. Instead of thinking of the other person, it brings out selfishness in our own souls.

- Guys... we're in the last days, it's time to love and forgive
- If you have offended someone, hurt someone, had a disagreement that has caused an end to a relationship... go make it right
- We need everybody to make it to the finish line... Be eager to love

The Third Distinctive Is A Loving Heart

1 Peter 4:9 (NKJV)

⁹ Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.

In most churches we associate hospitality with food

- The hospitality ministry is responsible for amazing coffee and food
- But that's not what Peter means by hospitality
- To be hospitable means to be loving to foreigners or strangers
- Now keep in mind, Peter was written to the Jewish believers who were dispersed in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia
- According to the law, Jews could not eat with foreigners or strangers
- So when Peter says... be loving to foreigners and strangers... this went against everything they'd been taught
- So they had a lot to grumble about... Peter says love without grumbling

I find the most common sin in the church is grumbling



- You plan a nice lunch for your friend and your friend brings a stranger to lunch... you think: this new person ruined my lunch... GRUMBLE
- Someone comes to church in a nice car... you think: what a materialistic person, look how they spend their money... GRUMBLE
- The new people's kids are out of control... GRUMBLE
- These strangers are trying to change how we do things... GRUMBLE
- Why don't these foreigners learn to speak English... GRUMBLE
- I don't want to hang out with people I don't know... GRUMBLE
- Grumbling is a misuse of the tongue that is rooted in PRIDE
- It says that I am above you so I'm going to judge you, but because I'm such a good Christian I'll just keep it to myself and secretly resent you
- Peter says it's the last days and we need to be loving to the people who are foreign to us, who are strange to us without GRUMBLING
- Love is patient, kind, does not behave rudely or seek its own, thinks no evil, bears, believes, hopes and endures all things

The Fourth Distinctive Is A Readiness To Serve

1 Peter 4:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

The word minister means to serve

- Peter says we are to serve one another with the gift God has give us
- The word for gift is Charisma and the root word is charis or grace
- Now we have come to define this term as gift, but it's really better defined as a manifestation of grace
- So a better way to think of a spiritual gift is... a spiritual gift is a manifestation of God's grace in our lives for the benefit of others
- We are to be ready to serve others with the grace we have received
- God has uniquely equipped and gifted every person in this room
- We need to stop holding out on each other

We come to church, we go home, we live our lives and many of us never step into our place in the Body of Christ

- And I'm not talking about whether or not you should serve in the children's ministry or pulling the trailer... which we need help with
- I'm talking about you as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ



- At salvation you received the grace of God, and now you are a distributor of God's love and you need to be ready to give it away
- The Holy Spirit that lives in you desires to use you to minister to others
- When you don't step out and let God use you, not only do you lose a blessing but we lose out on a blessing as well
- You are unique, irreplaceable in the Body of Christ
- What God does through you, He can only do through you

You might say... I don't know how to minister... Peter tells us how

1 Peter 4:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

First he says... If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God

- To speak as the oracles of God simply means to speak God's Word
- You're reading the Bible and there's a verse that sticks out to you
- Maybe God wants you to share that verse with someone today?
- Be open to letting God use you.

Second, Peter says... if anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability that God supplies

- The word Peter uses for ability speaks of military power, the power to bring health, the power to overcome, to strengthen
- To minister with the ability that God supplies is to minister in the power of the Holy Spirit

Paul said to the Corinthians

1 Corinthians 2:4-5 (NKJV)

⁴ And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

Third, Peter says... that in all things God may be glorified

- I need to minister in such a way that God is glorified
- That doesn't mean that God simply gets the credit
- But it means that I serve you in such a way that you want to glorify God
- Our actions are to constantly point people to Jesus



- In our homes, our marriages, in how we do business, in our relationships
- That in all things God may be glorified
- Why? Because Jesus is coming soon and we don't have time to waste
- Be serious and watchful in prayer, fervent in love, accepting without grumbling and ready to minister