

Serving Until the End

1 Peter 4:7-11

Intro

By way of introduction, would you please turn to...

Matthew 24:45-47 (NKJV)

45 "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season?

46 Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing.

47 Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods."

In these three verses the Lord Jesus shows us what it looks like to be a ***faithful and wise servant***...

- And this is a very important topic because being a ***faithful and wise servant*** is the *primary calling of a believer*...

The first thing to notice in vs 45 is that a ***faithful and wise servant*** is appointed to that position by *the master of the household*...

- In other words, there is no room for *self-appointment* in the household of God...

Instead, a true servant of God must be *called, equipped* and *appointed* by God Himself...

Secondly, we see that the servant whom God appoints is to *serve the other servants* — here this service is expressed as *giving them food in due season...*

- In other words, a wise and faithful servant will ***live an others-centered life*** — his or her life must be about *other people* if it is to be a life that is pleasing to God...

Next, in vs 46, we see that the **faithful and wise servant** will be *held accountable* for how his stewardship was handled...

- The master will return to judge the faithfulness of the servant — and *there will be a reward for faithful service...*

The faithful servant will be given *more responsibility* as a reward for his or her faithfulness over the *fewer responsibilities...*

- The theme of this passage is familiar to us if we are well acquainted with the scriptures...

But the one aspect of this passage that is especially important for our study today is what we read in vs 46...

Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing.

Here the Lord Jesus gives us another **beatitude** — an instruction on the blessed life — the happy life — the fulfilled life...

The focus of this instruction in vs 46 is that we will be truly happy if we keep serving until the end...

Whether that end is the Rapture of the church or our death — He wants to find us serving...

- And this is the primary focus of our study today as we continue our verse by verse study of 1 Peter...

Peter will remind us of the importance of ***serving until the end*** — of continuing on in what God has called us to until He calls us home...

With this as our introduction, would you please follow along as I read the passage that we will be studying this morning...

1 Peter 4:7-11 (NKJV)

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

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

9 Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.

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

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.

I do not have an outline this morning so we will simply work our way through these five verses...

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

What does Peter mean that **the end of all things is at hand**?...

- Didn't he write this almost 2000 years ago?...

Well, we get some interesting insight into this subject in...

Hebrews 1:1-2 (NKJV)

1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,

2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son...

My understanding is that ***the last days*** began with *the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ* and as a result human beings have been in the last days ever since...

- [expand on NT writers anticipating that the Lord Jesus could return for the church at any moment...]

[expand — David Guzik's illustration — human history running perpendicular to the last days — is now running parallel to it — right next to it...]

For some insight as to why the last days are taking so long, please turn to...

2 Peter 3:1-9 (NKJV)

1 Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder),

2 that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior,

3 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,

4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."

5 For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water,

6 by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water.

7 But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

- [expand on the Lord delaying judgment so that as many people as possible might be saved...]

Please remember — any day, including today — could be our last day...

So ***What's Important Now?*** — what should we be doing *now* since we could meet the Lord face to face this afternoon?...

With this in mind, please turn back to 1 Peter 4 as we continue on in vs 7...

But the end of all things is at hand;

The end of all things could occur at any moment — the Lord Jesus could return for His church or we could simply die and be released from this fallen flesh...

Since this is the reality of the situation, Peter gives us an exhortation...

therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.

Because we don't know when our time will be up — because we don't know when the Lord will pour out His judgment on the earth — we should be **serious** and **watchful** in our **prayers**...

serious — *to be able to think in a sound or sane manner, to be sober-minded...*

watchful — *well-balanced, self-controlled; vigilant...*

I believe that these instructions on **serious and watchful** prayer carry special important coming from the Apostle Peter...

To see what I mean, please turn to...

Matthew 26:36-46 (NKJV)

36 Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there."

37 And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed.

38 Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me."

39 He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."

40 Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "What! Could you not watch with Me one hour?"

41 Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

42 Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done."

43 And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.

44 So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

45 Then He came to His disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.

46 Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand."

It seems certain that Peter's failure in the Garden of Gethsemane had a lasting impact on him...

On that occasion, Peter failed to be serious and watchful in his prayers but the Lord was faithful to give Peter future opportunities to be faithful...

REMEMBER — Though you have failed in the past, God is ready to give you new opportunities to be a faithful and wise servant — to be serious and watchful in your prayers...

With that said, would you please turn back to 1 Peter 4 as we move into vs...

8 And above all things have fervent love for one another,

Here Peter makes it clear that ***the most important aspect*** of our serving is ***the love that we have for one another...***

- [ex. Greatest Commandments — Love God/Love Others...]

For more on this subject, please turn to...

1 Corinthians 13 (NKJV)

1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

4 Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up;

5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil;

6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;

7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.

9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part.

10 But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Clearly, **love** is the most important characteristic of a faithful and wise servant who serves until the end...

- But we are not free to redefine love — we must allow the Bible to define what love is and what love is not...[expand]

Please turn back to 1 Peter 4 as we continue to study verse 8...

And above all things have fervent love for one another,

fervent — *persevering, with the implication that one does not waver in one's display of interest or devotion; stretched-out...*

- [ex. Olympic runners running as hard as they can and stretching out at the finish line...]

This is how we are called to love one another — persevering, unwavering, stretching ourselves as we lean for the finish line...

Peter continues in vs 8...

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

Here Peter quotes Proverbs 10:12 and James does something similar in...

James 5:19-20 (NKJV)

19 Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back,

20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

But what does it mean that love covers a multitude of sins?...

I believe the best way to understand this is to think about how the Lord deals with **our** sins...

- He does not simply ignore them — He challenges us and wants us to deal with them — but He *does not broadcast them to others...*

In fact, the Lord usually only reveals our sins to others if we will not repent and confess to Him...

- At that point we put ourselves in a position where we need the intervention of another believer...[expand]

So, as we fervently love one another, we **will cover a multitude of sins** in the sense that we will not challenge one another on every single fault and failure...

- We will be able to live in fellowship with one another even though we are all sinners...

And as we *fervently love one another*, we will have ***Spirit-led discernment*** to understand what sins should be overlooked and what sins should be addressed...

- If something serious needs to be addressed, please understand that the Lord Jesus has given us instructions on how this should be carried out...

To see this instruction, please turn to...

Matthew 18:15-17 (NKJV)

15 “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

16 But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.'

17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.”

Also, the Apostle Paul gives this instruction in...

Galatians 6:1 (NKJV)

Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

Please turn back to 1 Peter 4 as we move into vs 9...

9 Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.

hospitable — *friend of strangers, kind to strangers...*

grumbling — *murmuring or muttering under your breath...*

In other words, be friendly and welcoming without a bad attitude...

I love the example of this that the Lord Jesus gave in...

Luke 14:12-14 (NKJV)

12 ...“When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid.

13 But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind.

14 And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”

- [expand — God is the ultimate example of being hospitable without grumbling — He invites us into relationship with Himself and is glad to do so...]

Let's turn back to 1 Peter 4 as we move into vs...

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

Let's break this verse down piece by piece...

As each one has received a gift,

It is vital to realize that each and every true Christian — each and every person who has been born again by the Holy Spirit — has received *at least one gift* from the Holy Spirit...

To see this, please turn to...

1 Corinthians 12:1-11 (NKJV)

1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant:

2 You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led.

3 Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

4 There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.

6 And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:

8 for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit,

9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit,

10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

Now please turn to...

Romans 12:6-8 (NKJV)

6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith;

7 or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching;

8 he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

So, it seems clear that each and every born again believer is gifted by the Holy Spirit...

- Also, I would argue that these two lists are not exhaustive but that there are innumerable varieties of giftings that believers have received that they might do the work of the ministry...

Now, if you do not know what your gifting is then begin to serve and find out...

- ***Ask mature believers around you to help you understand what your gifting is and be teachable and open to what they share with you...***

If you would, please turn back to 1 Peter 4:10...

As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another,

Here Peter reminds us that the purpose of the gifts of the Spirit are to minister to one another — to serve one another...

1 Corinthians 12:7 (NKJV)

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:

Ironically, we may wish to receive spiritual gifts so that we might become more popular or successful...

- Or we might want spiritual gifts so that we feel good about ourselves or so that we might experience something that will strengthen our weak faith...

But none of these are biblical reasons for seeking the gifts of the Spirit...

- Ministering to others — serving and blessing others — is the **only** legitimate reason for seeking and operating in the gifts of the Spirit...

With that said, there is one spiritual gift that is expressly stated as benefiting *only* the person who has the gift...

To see this, please turn to...

1 Corinthians 14:1-5 (NKJV)

1 Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

2 For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.

3 But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.

4 He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.

5 I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.

Please turn back to 1 Peter 4 as we look at the last part of vs 10...

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

We are to operate in our spiritual gifts — ministering to one another — as good stewards of the manifold grace of God...

steward — *manager of a household or estate...*

- Good stewards are those who faithfully manage the resources of their master...[expand]

I believe the most helpful passage on the topic of stewardship is found in...

1 Corinthians 4:1-5 (NKJV) [please turn there]

1 Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.

4 For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.

5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.

- [expand — be a good steward until the end — because the Lord will judge our stewardship...]

Please turn back to 1 Peter 4:10...

as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

manifold — *variegated, many-colored; varieties...*

The big idea here is that there is a ***great variety of gifts of the Spirit*** and ***these gifts are grace gifts from God...***

- These gifts are not dependent on ***earning*** and ***deserving*** — they come to us through ***believing*** and ***receiving***...

So, as good stewards we are to receive these grace gifts — in whatever variety the Holy Spirit chooses — and then use them to minister to others in a way that pleases Him...

Peter gives some specifics on this as we move into the final verse of our passage...

11 If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God.

In this context, this surely refers to ***teaching*** and ***preaching*** as well as to ***the gift of prophecy***...

- The phrase **as the oracles of God** could also be translated **as the utterances of God**...

Or to put it another way, a person who has truly been gifted by the Lord to speak should be able to say “this is what the Lord is saying”...

For example, I believe that I have been gifted to teach the Word of God...

And while I can't guarantee that every individual explanation or application that I give is accurate...

- On the whole I believe that what I teach you is God's will for your life — and that you can live a faithful life with Him as you choose to obey the instruction that I give...

And this is how the Apostle Peter — under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit — commands me to present it... 😊

Continuing on in vs 11...

If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies,

ministers — *serves one another...*

It seems that ***ministering*** is a broad category that may encompass all believers...

- And the key is that we are not to seek to minister to one another *in our own ability...*

Instead, we are to minister to one another with **the ability which God supplies...**

ability — *capability to function effectively; strength, power, might...*

Zechariah 4:6 (NKJV)

**'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,'
Says the LORD of hosts.**

- [expand — we are to seek to do the work of the ministry not in our own power but in the power that God provides...]

Continuing on in vs 11 we see the purpose of all ministry...

that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ,

glorified — *praised, honored...*

As we faithfully serve one another in the power that God provides, God the Father is glorified through His Son Jesus Christ...

- Ant this is the ultimate goal of our service — the glorifying of the Father through His Son in the power of the Holy Spirit...

And the last part of vs 11 makes it clear why this is so...

**to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever.
Amen.**

CWSB Dictionary

“...there is a glory of God which must be absolutely true and changeless...Glory, therefore, is the true apprehension of God or things. The glory of God must mean His unchanging essence. Giving glory to God is ascribing to Him His full recognition.”

So, when Peter says that all glory belongs to God He is saying that God is completely good...

That all good things find their genesis in Him — and because of that He is worthy of full and unending praise...

But wait — there's more...

Peter also tells us that all **dominion** belongs to Him as well...

dominion — *sovereignty, might, power...*

In other words, God has all the power...

The power that we possess is merely a *delegated power* and we are most wise when we use that delegated power to serve the one who loved us and gave Himself for us...

Conclusion

We will stop here for today and Lord-willing finish up chapter 4 next week...

- But as we close, I simply encourage you to remember that the end of all things is at hand — so choose to be a faithful and wise servant who keeps serving until the end...

As the Apostle Paul wrote in...

Galatians 6:9 (NKJV)

And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.