

November 2, 2025

1 Peter 4:1-6

¹Since 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, ²so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God.³ 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.⁴ With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; ⁵but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. ⁶For 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.

Scriptures for further study:

Judges 21:25

Proverbs 3:5

1 Peter 3:17-18

1 Peter 3:19

1 Corinthians 15:22

Romans 6:23

Hebrews 9:27



Grace and Suffering, Part III

1 Peter 4:1-6

BIG IDEA: Since God has rescued us in Jesus to a new way of life, let us stand firm in Gospel hope despite opposition as we endure the sufferings and hardships of life.

OUTLINE

1. A New Way of Living (verses 1-2)

2. Rejection and Judgment (verses 3-5)

3. Living Hope (verse 6)

“Obedience will make you look foolish in the eyes of the world, but wise before God.”

-Tim Keller

DISCIPLESHIP DURING THE WEEK

These “Sermon Discussion Questions” are designed for study during the week for believers in a wide variety of ages & stages in their walk with Christ.

1. According to 4:1–2, what is the connection between Christ’s suffering and our approach to sin? Read 1 Peter 2:24 and 1 Peter 3:18 to help you understand what Peter means when he says we have “ceased from sin.”
2. Thinking about 1 Peter 4:3 & 4, do you need to repent of a passive stance toward sin in general or toward some fleshly behavior in particular?
3. Are you willing to suffer and be ridiculed or “maligned” (v. 4) in order not to sin? Are there sins in this list (v. 3) that you would rather commit than endure ridicule for refusing to participate in?
4. In what ways are you pursuing the will of God? Where are you living by the will of man? (You might find it helpful to ask a Christian friend who knows you well to tell you their view of your life.)
5. How have you experienced others being surprised for what you won’t join them in doing? How does this passage help you to deal well with those moments?
6. In verse 6, Peter states that “the gospel was preached even to those who are dead.” In light of the phrase “the living and the dead” in verse 5, this probably means people who heard the gospel while they were living but who are now dead. How should the fact that our deceased Christian friends heard and believed the gospel affect our own perseverance amid suffering and persecution? (In answering this question, consider the last few words of the verse.)

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

After addressing different types of people in the church, particularly in relation to authority, Peter discusses how we should behave as a corporate community. Calling us to unity, charity, and humility, he lays the groundwork for our collective witness amid a hostile society.

-ESV Knowing the Bible 1 & 2 Peter

Praise to Jesus-We praise God that Christ suffered “in the flesh” (v.1), breaking sin’s power and securing resurrection life for His people so that by the Spirit we might live with a passion for God and not a passion for the flesh.

Repentance through Jesus-We repent of wasted years and lingering compromises with “passions, drunkenness, idolatry”. And even the recent desire to return to our vomit. Let us repent for fearing rejection by the world more so than fearing God.

Consecration for Jesus-We rededicate ourselves to a Christlike mindset. That life is no longer for self-indulgence but for God’s will.

FOR FAMILIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN

These questions are written to aid parents in leading family devotions with their children.

1. Talk with your children about how Christians in the past and present have faced persecution because of their faith. This can be difficult for a child to understand.

2. In verse 1, we read, "Christ suffered in the flesh." How do you feel about a Christians' suffering and hardship after you read that from verse 1? (Christ's death and resurrection provide the fuel for our lives of suffering by saving us and by providing the Holy Spirit to connect us with God and with each other. Christ's suffering allows Him to be empathetic and compassionate.)

3. In verse 2, for whom or what does Peter say that Christians should live? For whom or what should we not live? (Peter tells us that we should live for the "will of God" and for "human passions" or "evil human desires.")

4. What is the will of God? How can we figure out God's will? (We know God's will by understanding the Scriptures. Passages such as Exodus 20 and Galatians 5:22-24 show us God's will for our lives. We are called to become more like Jesus through our faith and trust in Him.)

Scriptures for further study:

Romans 6:1-14

FOR STUDENTS

1. According to 1 Peter 4:1-2, what does Peter mean when he says, “whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin”? How should Christ’s suffering shape our thinking about sin and how we live the rest of our lives?
2. In verse 2, Peter contrasts living “for human passions” with living “for the will of God.” What does this look like practically in your life? Where do you see yourself pursuing one more than the other?
3. In verse 3, Peter lists specific sins that marked the lives of believers before they knew Christ. How does remembering who we were before Jesus help us appreciate the grace of God and fight sin now?
4. In verse 4, Peter says that others are “surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you.” Have you ever been misunderstood, mocked, or excluded for choosing not to join in sin? How does this verse help you understand and endure those moments?
5. What encouragement does verse 5 offer for believers who feel pressure to compromise? How does knowing that unbelievers will “give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead” help you persevere in doing what is right?
6. According to verse 6, “the gospel was preached even to those who are dead.” How does this verse give you hope, especially when you think about Christians who have died? How does this encourage you to remain faithful in the face of suffering?

FOR NON-BELIEVERS OR NEW BELIEVERS

1. Christ was willing to suffer and die for the sake of obedience to God. Peter says we must “arm ourselves also with the same attitude” (v.1). That is, we should think as Christ did about obedience and suffering: that it is better to do right and suffer for it than to commit sin. (See again 3:17)

Question: Are you living with this same mindset and motivation?

2. Peter says that as believers we are “done with sin” or have “ceased from sin” (v.1). This does not mean that we no longer sin at all, but that we have made a decisive break with sin.

Question: How would you describe your attitude toward sin? Have you developed an “oh well” resignation to it? Or have you made a Spirit-empowered resolve to cease from sin and to remove it from your life?

3. In verse 2, Peter indicates that there are essentially only two ways by which a person might choose to live their life. What are they?

4. Peter describes pagans in unflattering terms as idolatrous and morally unrestrained, continuously disappointed in their endless search for pleasure, ultimately rushing headlong into destruction.

Question: If you are a new believer, and this describes your former life, when and how did you come to the point of having enough of living that way? If you still know some of the people you used to “run with,” how have they responded to your change in beliefs and values? Are they surprised? Do they think you are now weird? Do they heap up abuse?

5. How does the reality of future judgment (v.5) give hope to Christians who may experience suffering (or even martyrdom) at the hands of non-believers?

6. For those who believe the gospel that is preached, what great hope is Peter saying we shall have when we die? (v.6)

Living Hope: How God's Glorious Grace in Jesus Shapes and Empowers Us by the Spirit to Live with Gospel Grit in a Foreign Land.



Daniel in the Lion's Den by Briton Riviere, 1872

About the Artist: Briton Rivière, a British painter known for his animal paintings, particularly those featuring dogs and wild animals with deep emotion and dramatic flair, came from an artistic family. His father, William Rivière, was a drawing master and art teacher. Rivière initially studied at the University of Oxford, drawn to literary and historical themes, but later developed a fascination with animals and became renowned for his ability to imbue them with emotional depth and narrative presence.

About the Artwork

"Daniel in the Lion's Den" (1872) depicts the biblical story with lifelike lions, a popular and symbolic theme in Victorian England. It explores faith under trial, divine protection, and moral strength against tyranny, themes that resonated with Victorian audiences during a time when Christian values and moral courage were emphasized.

In Riviere's painting, Daniel's calm, unarmed demeanor symbolizes absolute trust in God. His gaze suggests prayer, hope, or spiritual communion, not fear. He represents the righteous man steady in the face of evil. The lions, though fierce, are subdued, a miracle of restraint. Riviere doesn't show angels or supernatural intervention; the restraint is invisible, spiritual. Some lions are relaxed, others alert, suggesting the tension between nature and divine command. Each lion has a distinct personality, reflecting the mystery of creation. The focused light on Daniel recalls God's presence in darkness. The murky den symbolizes the unknown, death, or temptation, yet Daniel remains untouched. Unlike dramatic biblical scenes, there's no movement or violence. The silence emphasizes Daniel's victory through trust, countering 19th-century action-heavy storytelling with a meditation on spiritual endurance.

1 Peter and Daniel in the Lion's Den

This painting, based on a biblical scene, helps us understand the overall theme of the New Testament letter. 1 Peter teaches Christians that as God's elect, they are called to live holy lives of faithful witness, enduring suffering with hope rooted in God's grace, while embracing their Gospel identity as a holy, royal priesthood in a hostile world. Like Daniel in the Old Testament, we are strangers in a distant place. Jesus told his disciples and us in the Gospel of John that we are "not of this world." Hebrews reminds the church that "this world is not their permanent home." Even within 1 Peter, God's people are called "sojourners and exiles."

Like Daniel, the darkness of this broken, sinful, and fallen world is always present. While we may never face a physical lion, Peter's first letter tells us that our enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, and the spiritual forces of evil are ever present. Yet, like Daniel, we must face the opposition with a Gospel poise, knowing that which is unseen is more powerful than what is seen and against us. Peter uses the language of "standing firm" in God's grace as we encounter all forms of darkness.

Church, may we see the beauty of 1 Peter in its overall message: God's glorious grace leading us to Gospel grit as sojourners in a dark world. But may we not just perceive its beauty but also embrace God's unique calling in these words: stand firm!