

Sunday October 10th 2010

Petros

Part Seventeen

1). 1Pe 4:7 ¶ *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.*

a). We had seen last week how covering ‘a multitude of sins’ appears in two places in the NT – once here in 1 Peter and the other in James. In Peter it is connected to having fervent agape/love for one another within a context of prayer, prayer which is to be both serious and watchful, because the end is at hand.

b). In James we see it, also within a context of prayer, but connected there with the saving of a soul from death, as the sinner, the Christian who has wandered from the truth, is turned back from the error of his way.

c). Given the overall scope of the Book of James, the pinnacle upon which the Book ends, the saving of a soul from death, would be an expression of the pinnacle of the Christian experience of fervent agape/love for one another that we find in 1 Peter.

d). And so, the covering of a multitude of sins is not an action on our part, but an action on God’s part as the Christian in error is brought to repentance, thereby receiving forgiveness and cleansing resulting in the multitude of sins that has come from his error being eradicated, being ‘covered’ through the mercy of God.

2). V9 - *9 Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.* – takes us to a practical exhortation.

a). The word translated ‘hospitable’ literally means to be friendly to strangers and would in this sense have to do with taking care of those who we do not usually associate with.

b). The perfect example of this would be those who come for the conference who we don’t know, and yet because of our common bond through the word of the Kingdom, we take them into our homes and look after them.

c). And we can see from our scripture that this is to be done, ‘without grumbling’ – which means exactly what it says.

d). Within the historical context of the letter we can understand how some of those suffering under Roman persecution could have been left with nothing but their life. And wherever geographically they came from it was incumbent upon those to whom they came to receive them and care for them without grumbling about it.

3). V10 then continues with more practical exhortation - *10 As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

a). ‘As’, in the original language is, ‘in whatever quality or quantity’ and the word ‘gift’ is the Greek word ‘charisma’ which speaks of a Divinely given enablement that has been graciously bestowed on an individual to aid them in that which God requires of them.

b). And so, in whatever quality or quantity each one, and not necessarily everyone, has received that Divine gift, they are to minister that gift to one another. And again, following on from the previous verse, this would not be just those in our immediate context, but whoever comes in search of the Kingdom.

c). And this is to be done ‘as good stewards’ of the manifold grace of God that has been given. The word translated ‘stewards’ is literally ‘one who governs a household’ and it speaks of the responsibility and proper use of that given into that person’s care - *1Co 4:2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.*

d). What follows is then an example of how this should be - *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,*

e). The one who speaks then is to speak that which God has said – this would be the same principle that the Lord draws attention to with regards to Himself in - *Joh 12:49 "For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak.*

f). And here is the safety for all those who preach and teach – it is exclusively that which God has said, recorded in the scriptures, that is to be presented.

g). And if anyone ministers then it must be done with the ability that God supplies, never from our own resources – and both the speaking and the ministering are to be done this way so - *that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

f). And so through our speaking as the oracles of God and our ministering in the ability God has given, He is glorified, because it is His work through us that is manifest and not our own.

4). Then our scripture continues - 1Pe 4:12 ¶ *Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;*

a). Our verse begins with a reminder of that which we were told in Chapter 2:11 – We are Divinely loved – His own special people. And it is within the comfort and the context of this that our suffering is placed.

b). For many Christians suffering is alien to their concept of what a Christian is, but our scripture plainly tells us that we are not to view suffering this way – ‘do not think it strange’, rather we are to see it as natural and expected if we are determined to live by the truth of scripture alone - 2Ti 3:12 *Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*

c). Suffering in our verse from Peter is described as ‘the fiery trial’. The Greek word translated ‘fiery’ can also be found in the Greek translation of the OT in - Pr 27:21 ¶ *The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, And a man is valued by what others say of him.*

Where it translates the word ‘furnace’.

d). It is also found in - Ps 66:10 *For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined.*

Where it translates the word ‘refined’.

e). What we see then is that our suffering for righteousness sake is the smelting pot in which our lives are purified. This then brings us back to the same truth that we found in - 1Pe 1:6 ¶ *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,*

f). These verses from Chapter 4 then both reiterate and give additional commentary on our verses from Chapter 1.

g). 1Pe 4:13 *but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.*

h). What we see here in v13 is that in so far as we partake of Christ’s sufferings, we suffer for righteousness sake, enduring grief, suffering wrongfully’ we should rejoice. We do not rejoice in the suffering itself, but in the fact that we may partake of the same sufferings as Christ.

i). Rejoice = Greek – ‘chairō’ = a primary verb; to be "cheer"ful, i.e. calmly happy or well-off;

j). A good example of this is found with regards to Peter and John in –

Ac 5:41 *So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing [chairō] that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.*

k). Our ‘cheerfulness’ at partaking in Christ’s suffering in the present, providing we respond to them scripturally, will turn into ‘exceeding joy’ when His glory is revealed future.

l). With exceeding joy = Greek – ‘agalliao’ = to jump for joy.

m). Because in that Day we will receive, praise, honor and glory from the Lord and Romans 8:18 will be fulfilled for us - Ro 8:18 *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

5). 1Pe 4:14 *If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.*

a). Our scripture continues by giving further amplification of what has preceded it.

b). If we are reproached, or reviled, for the name of Christ, for standing for righteousness, for being obedient to the scriptures by enduring grief, suffering wrongfully then we are blessed. And the word translated ‘blessed’ speaks of being spiritually prosperous. And we are spiritually prosperous in this because the ‘Spirit of glory and of God’ rests upon us.

c). ‘On their part’ – on the part of those who speak evil of us and revile us because of our faithful obedience, their speaking evil and reviling is not against us, but they are rather blaspheming God. But ‘on your part’, because we remain faithful to the scriptures and then suffer for that, enduring grief, God is glorified – He is esteemed and honored. It is then honoring to God when we are reproached for His name and respond to it with the same mind as Christ had.

6). 1Pe 4:15 *But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters.*

a). V15 then gives us some qualification and perspective – If we should suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer or as a busybody in other people’s matters, then that suffering is thoroughly deserved and there is no spiritual prosperity, no blessing in it - 1Pe 2:20 *For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God.*

b). On the other hand - 1Pe 4:16 *Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.*

c). We see a contrast made here between suffering as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer or a busybody and suffering as a Christian. Today, for us within our

western setting, being a Christian can appear to be pretty innocuous, but within its historical setting, being classified as a Christian was a good deal more powerful.

d). Throughout the Roman Empire the Caesar was worshipped as a god which effectively meant the control of the political and the religious. And all within the empire, not just those in Rome, were expected to relate to Caesar in this way. The Greek word for Caesar is 'Kaisar' and those who worshipped the 'Kaisar' were called 'Kaisarianos'. Now the Church with its message of the Kingdom was looking for the Christ to take the reins of the government of the earth, accompanied by His joint heirs, thereby replacing Gentile world power which at this time had Rome as its head. Those who followed Christ were called 'Christianos' and found themselves of necessity in direct opposition to Caesar worship and a threat to the empire. Being a Christian then was not just a religious conviction, but from the perspective of Rome, was an act of treason against the state and blasphemy against its god.

e). So when we read *Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian* we would realize the severity of the suffering that would be experienced within the historical setting. In suffering for being a Christian in this way though there was to be no shame even though that person would be denounced for treason, but instead of this God would be glorified, would be honored through the depth of the faith demonstrated.

f). It is doubtful that any of us would 'suffer as a Christian' after this fashion, but we should certainly not dismiss the possibility.

g). However, we should remember that the Caesar was just the earthly instrument of the god of this world and the persecution that would come from the hands of the Romans was a concerted effort from the principalities and powers in heavenly places to remove the threat to their position of rulership. And any Christian today who would determine to be 'a Christian' in the sense we have just looked at will find himself the target of persecution through the actions of the rulers of the darkness of this age.

7). 1Pe 4:17 *For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" 19 Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.*

a). The beginning of v17 draws attention to two things, firstly this is the time when God is dealing with His house, with His household servants, during this dispensation, the 'church', having set Israel aside. And secondly it speaks prophetically of the beginning order for Judgment that will start with the Church at the resurrection/rapture and conclude with the eternally lost at the Great White Throne. This is now the time, the season when this is to be expected.

b). And we would also need to make a distinction here between those Christians who through their faithful obedience are being built up, a spiritual house 1Pe 2:4 ¶ *Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

c). And those Christians who aren't being built up a spiritual house, described as 'the ungodly and the sinner' in v18.

d). We might call to mind this from - Heb 3:6 *but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end. 7 ¶ Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice, 8 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness, 9 Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years. 10 Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, 'They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.' 11 So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'" 12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;*

e). We see here, recorded in Hebrews, that those who will be His house, who will ultimately be identified at the Judgment Seat, are those who 'hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.' Those who will today hear His voice and not harden their hearts in rebellion, those who have not gone astray in their hearts.

f). That first generation of Israel to come out of Egypt is given to us as an example of what the ungodly and the sinner would look like – they were in rebellion against God in the wilderness, they went astray in their hearts and did not know His ways – they had an evil heart of unbelief.

g). And in our example of Israel the scriptures themselves answer the question asked in Peter - *what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? - 11 So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'*"

h). It is plain and simple when we see it this way.

i). Those Christians who do not obey the gospel of God would be the very ones who have 'an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God'.

j). As we continue into v18 it is still Christians, those who are of the household of God who are in view. The eternally lost are not being dealt with at all here - *18 Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?"*

k). The word translated 'scarcely' here should be understood as 'with difficulty' rather than being a scarcity and we would understand this in the light of such scriptures as - Mt 7:13 *"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14*

"Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Ac 14:22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."

Ru 1:14 Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

l). So then if the righteous one, the one whose lifestyle is consistent faithful obedience, finds that the road to the salvation of the soul is a difficult one, our Peter scripture asks, 'Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?' Those Christians who have an evil heart of unbelief, those Christians who do not obey the gospel of God.

m). Despite the difficulty of the way that leads to life the righteous one, the one who is faithfully obedient, the one who has overcome the world, the flesh and the devil, will receive the salvation of his soul and as a result will appear with Christ in glory - Col 3:4 *When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.*

n). The ungodly and the sinner however, even though eternally saved, will not appear with Him in glory, no, they will appear in a different place altogether – Mt 25:30 *'And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*

o). The process of judging Man will begin with us, the household of God, and at that judgment there are only two possible outcomes for all Christians – either glory or darkness.

p). Whichever it is will be a result of our own choice to allow God to build our lives solely on the truth of His word – or not.

q). With this in mind Chapter 4 concludes –

8). *19 Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.*

a). In v12 -16 we have seen the 'fiery trial' which is to try us, we have seen partaking of Christ's sufferings, being reproached for the name of Christ and suffering as a Christian. In v17-18, which we have just looked at we have seen judgment and two possible outcomes for Christians, which would have to do with their attitude to the unjust suffering of our previous verses. And so, in v19, because of the Judgment that will begin at the household of God, and because of the two possible outcomes at that judgment the exhortation is to those who suffer according to the will of God to commit their souls to God in doing good, committing their souls as to a faithful Creator.

b). Suffering according to the will of God would take us firstly to that which we saw in - 1Pe 3:14 *But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed.*

c). It may be that God will require us to suffer unjustly, and if this is so then our suffering comes 'according to the will of God'.

d). And secondly, if we are having to suffer unjustly, then our attitude to it also needs to be 'according to the will of God' in the same sense we saw in – 1Pe 3:17 *For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.*

e). Those suffering unjustly, who choose to arm themselves with the same mind as Christ, would be, as a result of their action, committing their souls to Him. We have just seen the verses concerning judgment and the outcome of that judgment therefore, knowing this outcome and knowing what is at stake, they are, by following the commands of scripture, trusting, believing, having faith in God to the salvation of their soul. This would be the same as the example given by Christ in - 1Pe 2:23 *who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;*

f). Commit = Greek – 'paratithemi' = to deposit (as a trust or for protection)

g). It is then in their choice to do good that the deposit of their soul is made.

h). And this deposit is entrusted to a faithful Creator. We may thank God that He is faithful - Heb 10:23 *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.*

i). And the use of the word 'Creator' here is not without significance. As we see this word it would inevitably takes us back to one place - Isa 40:28 *Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable.*

j). That place would be Genesis and the reason for Man's creation - Ge 1:27 *So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*

k). That which God had stated in the beginning as the Creator is as true now as it was when first spoken – God's creation, Man, will rule over the earth with His Son.

l). Beyond Adam, Israel was created for that very same reason - Isa 43:15 *I am the LORD, your Holy One, The Creator of Israel, your King."* Great is His faithfulness.

m). And after the setting aside of Israel for two days the 'Church' is created for the same purpose - *2Co 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

Great is His faithfulness.

n). *Isa 46:10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,'*

Great is His faithfulness - *Re 11:15 Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"*

o). In whose hands would you deposit your soul in the midst of suffering wrongfully? The faithful Creator or the spirit of the world?

9). And if the Lord is willing, next week we will begin on 1 Peter Chapter 5 the final Chapter of our Book.