

## 1 Peter 4:1-6

1Pe 4:1 (NKJV) **Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,<sup>2</sup> that he no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.<sup>3</sup> For we *have spent* enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles--when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.<sup>4</sup> In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with *them* in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of *you*.<sup>5</sup> They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.<sup>6</sup> For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.**

In [1 Peter 4:1](#), Peter uses the phrase that those who have “**suffered in the flesh**” have “**ceased from sin**”. That has always given theologians some trouble in how to actually interpret it. It simply means that the believer has made a very conscientious break with sin. It does not mean that they are sinless, but rather that they are “**done with sin**” (NIV) as a way of life, they are finished with allowing sin to rule, dominate, and control their life. Any believer who is serious about their Christian life will always take sin in their life very seriously, so this phrase does not mean that they never sin. That would be what some call “sinless perfection” – a very false doctrine. The verb for “**ceased**” means that the believer has made a conscious decision to refrain from sin, to be done with the sin in which he previously lived.<sup>1</sup> That really should be true of each of us. There should be a knowledge of that time in our life when we know that we actually made a sincere break with sin and in that moment that we willingly chose to live for Christ and not for sin. For most of us, surely it should have been at the moment of our salvation when we genuinely committed our life to Christ. However, I am confident that many have sincerely done that with great intentions, but then were lured and enticed back into their previous sinful lifestyle that Peter described in v3

The reason that we know that it was a conscious decision that the believer made is because it is in the indicative mood, perfect tense, and middle voice. The indicative mood is the mood of fact, or that something has actually happened, actually transpired in the person’s life. We could call it the mood of reality as opposed to say the mood of possibility. I love the middle voice because it simply means that the individual himself knew exactly what they were doing. In this context, they fully understood their responsibility regarding sin in their life and they made a very conscientious decision to break with the sin in their life that they knew was contrary to what God really wanted for them. However, the perfect tense is the most revealing aspect of this verb because it reveals that the decision was made in the past, but that it is still spiritually impacting the person’s life right now. I.e., that decision is having an ongoing impact and influence on the person’s life. The perfect tense generally indicates something that has a permanent and ongoing quality to it that has happened in a person’s life as opposed to some decision that they made that was very fleeting and short-lived. God brought them to a moment of decision and realization about an area of their life, and they made the right choice and have since lived out that conviction that God created in them. Once again, this should be true of each of us.

<sup>1</sup> Zodhiates, 1132.

These are godly decisions that we all have to make throughout our entire life. We have to make these kinds of choices all the time. It can be any kind of area that God chooses to touch in our life, but when He touches that area of our life and He creates a conviction within us about something, we need to respond with resolve and determination. It is part of what we addressed in the first part of this verse in the last message and the need to “**think strong**”, to think biblically. A lot of people make emotional type “decisions”, but the long term impact of those decisions is often very short lived and ultimately meaningless for their life. In my mind, the believer that makes good decisions, but fails to follow through with them, is very susceptible to ongoing failure and despair. God is constantly working in us to change us. He is always working on different areas of our life, but it is still up to us to consistently find ways to integrate and assimilate His work into our life. There is no spiritual autopilot button we can press to make this happen – not at all. It always takes place following God’s conviction regarding a particular area of our life, and we are responsible to respond to that conviction with resolve and determination. For most believers, it will always involve a high measure of discipline and resolve in order to break with some sin that is impacting our lives.

Let us assume that you are someone who struggles in this area, and that you are the person with good intentions who never follows through with those intentions. If that is the case, then what you need is another mature believer to help you and to hold you accountable – and you should seek that person out. It is my personal conviction that God never intended for us to do everything alone. I love the verse in [Proverbs 18:24](#) that says,

**Pr 18:24 (NKJV) A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.**

In the body of Christ, God will always provide someone to help you if you are not able to make the necessary adjustments that are needed to rid your life of some sin, of some bad habit, of some debilitating issue that is crippling your life. Not that I am right about this or should overemphasize it, but I have always believed that the most important gift within a local church was the gift of encouragement, of exhortation. Encouraging people and being willing to help those who have strategic needs in their life is so essential for the health of a local assembly. Everyone needs encouragement. No one is exempt from needing encouragement in their life. Everybody has trials and struggles that we may not know about. They struggle with decisions, with raising children, with finances, with managing their time, with motivation, with their Christian life, and who knows what else. So, to have someone who comes along side of them and encourages them is often much more important than we might ever realize. Most people do not want other people to know that they are struggling in some area.

Last Sunday after church I received a text from someone and all it said was “*Great message today*”. That one encouragement just made my day. That is what encouragement does – it builds someone up in their faith, in their resolve, and in their perspective on the Christian life. It motivates them and causes them to believe that they truly are able to be and to become what God wants for their life. So, if you are struggling in some area of your life, then find another brother or sister who you believe will be willing to invest some time in your life so that you do not have to do everything alone. Be transparent with them, be honest with them, but also be willing to receive their encouragement and possible changes that you may need to make in your life.

When we come to v2 it says,

**1Pe 4:2 (NKJV) that he no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.**

This is the goal, this is what we are aiming for, this is what personal resolve and determination are always about – to live out the will of God in our life. When I read a verse like this, I realize that God always has a way of adjusting our focus on life and what is important. Please think for a moment about the phrase “**the rest of his time**”. The NIV says “**the rest of his earthly life**”. Right now you only have so much time left in your life. It is always getting less and less and less. You have less time today than you had yesterday. I have said it this way in the past that “everyday counts”. Every day has opportunities that we may never see or be given again, people that God allows to come into our life and cross our paths. Everyone we meet is a mission field, every person that we interact with is a mission field. So, the question is whether or not we really see them that way, do we look at them that way because the moments and chances that we have to redeem those opportunities will always be very short-lived.

[Ephesians 5:16-17](#) says,

**Eph 5:15 (NKJV) See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, <sup>16</sup> redeeming the time, because the days are evil.**

It really is a very critical issue for every Christian to fully understand and appreciate that “**to whom much is given, much is required**”. The supernatural calling of salvation has divine expectations and responsibilities, and with great knowledge and spiritual giftings comes great responsibilities that cannot be ignored or casually dismissed or displaced because of other priorities in our life. I have said it often, but there is no such thing as a no-cost Christianity. It simply does not exist. I hope that each of us are fully convinced that once we started down our Christian path that the expectation that Christ had of each of us is that it is a lifetime commitment that will impact all that we are, all that we do, and all that we have. If I can say it this way, each of us are on a collision course with God where He will probably upset all of our personal and cultural perspectives of the Christian life. Once we placed our hand on God’s plow, we were told to never look back.

In these two verses in [Ephesians 5](#), Paul gives us two admonitions. The first is to “**walk circumspectly**” and the second is that of “**redeeming the time**”. In the first admonition, the implication is that to not walk cautiously and carefully is a sign of foolishness and thoughtlessness. It is evidence that we actually lack wisdom. We could actually say that it would be spiritually reckless not to walk carefully. When Paul uses the word “**see**” it is a very common Greek word “*blepo*” and it simply means to discern something mentally, to be observant, to be perceptive, to look to something in the sense of taking care and taking heed to all that surrounds you. It carries with it the idea of being attentive, of being watchful. It really is a very important word with serious implications. Stating it a different way, it is like Paul is urging us to be wide awake at all times, fully cognizant and aware of what is taking place around us.

When we come to the word “**walk**”, it is also a very common New Testament word that refers to how we order our behavior and how we conduct ourselves in a world that is blatantly and unapologetically unmoved by Christ. How we live matters. How we talk matters. How we react or respond matters. What we do with our time matters. Then, the word “**circumspectly**” simply means to live out our life carefully. If you were driving a car, it would be like saying that you need to stay on the right-hand side

of the road. Be careful, do not text while driving, stay alert. Because of the tenses of the verbs, we could simply translate the phrase this way – **“Be very careful how you live”** simply because everyone is watching. So, how we live and conduct ourselves has great implications associated with it that simply cannot be ignored or disregarded. We represent Christ, so our life and our conduct have a great bearing on our ultimate usefulness and impact.

In the second admonition, we are encouraged to **“redeem the time”** that God has given to us. One of the reasons why Paul says that it is critical to **“redeem the time”** is because the days in which we live are what he calls **“evil days”**. The actual Greek word for **“evil”** is *“poneros”* which refers to that which is hurtful in its effect and influence. It is evil in active opposition to that which is godly. The evil times in which we live are ALWAYS actively operating against our godly values and convictions to weaken us, to destroy and harm us. So, if we become careless in how we live and how we respond to God’s calling on our life, we can be assured that this evil will eventually damage and destroy different areas of our life, as well as our families.

When we come to the second admonition and to the word **“redeem”** it simply means to buy up, or to rescue from a loss. In this particular context, it refers specifically to making a very wise and sacred use of every opportunity for doing what God wants us to do. Now, and this is very important, so listen carefully. The word for **“time”** is not the normal Greek word *“chronos”* for just normal time as we speak about it. If I were to ask you what time it is in the Greek language, I would use the word *“chronos”*. However, in this Ephesians passage the word for **“time”** is the Greek word *“kairos”* which refers more to seasons of time, seasons of opportunities. It refers specifically to a very fixed and definite period, to specific God ordained seasons in our life. It is a distinct and discrete period of divine opportunity that may pass if we do not take advantage of it in our life. So, the idea that Paul is expressing here is not so much the idea of not wasting our time on frivolous activities (which is certainly something that we should not do), but it speaks much more to the idea of not wasting the divine opportunities that God gives to us – which is a very different idea. Think of your life this way: God has measured out and appointed specific seasons of opportunity for you that He wants to use for His redemptive purposes. We never know how much, how many, or how often, but we can be assured that if we are not walking and living circumspectly and carefully, if we are just being frivolous and careless in how we live, then our propensity to redeem those seasons and opportunities in our life will simply be wasted away. Listen to what [James 4:14](#) says,

Jas 4:14 (NKJV) .... **For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.**

Our life is just a **“vapor”** – a Swoooosh, and then it’s gone. I am struck down with the reality of the simple statement that in eternity that my life is just a simple Swoooosh, just **“a vapor that appears for a little time”** (*oligos* – just a little while), **and then vanishes away”**. The problem is that we all think that we actually have more time than we really have. In the big picture, my life is just a big old Swoosh, just a vapor that vanishes much too quickly. I am 72 years old and as I look back over my life, I just wonder where it all went. I wanted to do more, I wanted to accomplish more, I wanted to be more faithful, I wanted to study more, I wish I had started earlier – but that time is gone. Those redemptive periods of time are gone. My dear friends, you do not want to one day look back over your life and regret that you found reasons to ignore and waste the amazing redemptive opportunities that God opened

for you because you were too busy or too lazy or too foolish with your time, foolish in your decisions, and foolish with the abundance of your resources. Here is what I believe you will find to be true regarding God’s divine opportunities – **what you disregard today, you will forget tomorrow**. If you are a Christian, then you can be assured that God’s redemptive opportunities will come. They will test you – sometimes severely. They will reveal what is really important to you and how you see the Christian life. They will reveal what you have really learned, what you really believe and care about - then they will be gone. They are only for a “*kairos*”, only for a season, only for a specific period of time, and you have been called on by God to be a good steward of every single one of those divine opportunities.

So one of the encouragements of [1 Peter 4:2](#) is this and it is very simple. The “**rest of your time**” is much shorter than you may realize, so do everything in your power to ensure that you are living “**for the will of God**” as much as you possibly can. Give yourself to what pleases Him and not to what pleases you, and in so doing, God will provide you more and more opportunities to be useful to Him and to His purposes for your life.

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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