

## **1 Peter 4:7-11**

### **The end is near**

Good morning RCM, and those that are with us on FB Live. So very glad that we can stream our services for those that are uncomfortable gathering in person. For those of you on the live stream, if you need anything please don't hesitate to let me know and we'll take care of it.

Last week, I reiterated a challenge to all the kids, 20 and under, to memorize 1 Peter 5:12. So far, the only one that I know of that has memorized 1 Peter 5:12 is Ellie. So Ellie, here's an illuminated scripture journal for the book of Acts. We will start the book of Acts on Sunday September 13 and we'll work through Acts together as a church, 1 chapter a week, just like we did the Gospel of John earlier this year. So kids – the challenge is still open, memorize 1 Peter 5:12 and say it to an adult and you'll get one of these journals.

Today we're continuing in 1 Peter 4:7-11. And the main idea I want us to consider, as we open the word together is:

### **Live like you know how the story ends**

Turn with me, if you have a Bible, to 1 Peter 4:7-11. I'm reading from the CSB:

<sup>7</sup>The end of all things is near; therefore, be alert and sober-minded for prayer. <sup>8</sup>Above all, maintain constant love for one another, since **love covers a multitude of sins.** <sup>9</sup>Be hospitable to one another without complaining. <sup>10</sup>Just as each one has received a gift, use it to serve others, as good stewards of the varied grace of God. <sup>11</sup>If anyone speaks, let it be as one who speaks God's words; if anyone serves, let it be from the strength God provides, so that God may be glorified through Jesus Christ in everything. To him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

### **PRAY.**

### **Live like you know how the story ends**

My kids are readers – and I'm super thankful that they all are active readers. Grace probably the most passionate reader of them all. I asked her this week if she ever reads the end of the book to see if it's worth reading – surprisingly she said no because she wants to be motivated to read it faster and be surprised by the ending.

To me though, I'd say the most efficient way would be to read the ending chapters, then decide if you even want to read the rest – but you can read it so much quicker this way right?

Any of you ever tape a football game? And then make efforts to not know the outcome? Growing up, I remember this one year my dad had a service at the church on Super Bowl Sunday night, and my brother and I stayed home and watched it, but my dad recorded it

insisting that we not tell him the outcome. Classic line, when he comes home from church, one of us say to him “Dad, we won’t tell you who won, but you’re gonna be happy.”

Whether it’s a book, or a movie, or a football game – If you know how it ends, the way you experience it is TOTALLY different.

As a Christian – if you have turned from your sin, and are trusting in Jesus – you know how the story ends. You know the final score. But we need to live like it! That’s what Peter’s telling us in these verses.

### **I. The End is Near**

V7 – The end of all things is near – Peter has in mind Jesus’s coming to gather his church. To bring home all of those who have trusted in Jesus. The end is near.

- End → gives the picture of an achieved goal – or the fulfillment → pointing to the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Jesus.
  - Remember, Jesus promised that he’s coming back. It’s a guarantee.
  - And every day that you and I wake up in the morning, we’re one day closer.

So, if we know the ending of the story, Peter calls us to live like it by being alert and sober-minded → FOR PRAYER.

- It’s the idea of being watchful and ready and practically wise.
- Evaluating our decisions and our actions and our day to day living through by the idea that
  - (1) we are just passing through as aliens/exiles – remember how Peter opened this letter calling the people of the churches exiles – so that we don’t get too comfortable or settle in **AND**
  - (2) Jesus is coming back and most of the things we worry about and invest our time and resources into won’t really matter.
- Luke 12:35 (NASB)
  - <sup>35</sup> “[e] Be dressed in readiness, and *keep* your lamps lit. <sup>36</sup> Be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open *the door* to him when he comes and knocks .
- Dressed in readiness → BECAUSE WE KNOW THE END IS NEAR.

So we know the end is near, we’re called to be ready – and to LOVE one another

### **II. MAINTAIN LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER**

Hear Peter’s words → love is something to be maintained.

- You don’t maintain your car? It’s gonna break down
- You don’t maintain your AC? It’s gonna break down
- Just this week I started teaching my sons some of the basics of maintaining our bicycles. Let me tell you, a properly maintained bicycle rides so much better.

You get the point. We work to maintain love for one another – because we know how the story ends. We work to maintain love. Victoria and I, work to maintain our relationship – means we spend time just the two of us – we work.

Here's the kicker – love covers a multitude of sin. We love one another:

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

<sup>4</sup> Love is patient, love is kind. Love does not envy, is not boastful, is not arrogant, <sup>5</sup> is not rude, is not self-seeking, is not irritable, and does not keep a record of wrongs. <sup>6</sup> Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth. <sup>7</sup> It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

We think of these verses in the context of a marriage – in fact these verses were ready when Victoria and I were married – but understand the context is within the local church. This is from a letter written to a church (not a letter written to a married couple). Written to Christians in a church that needed to be taught how to love one another.

This is how we are to love – BECAUSE WE KNOW THE END OF THE STORY! I've read the last chapter of the book. I got the score report on my phone before I ever turned on the game. We can love people in our churches this way because we know the end.

Love covers a multitude of sins – In the context of Peter's letter – I think what he's saying is that if we love each other, maintain constant love for one another – we will quickly forgive when people offend us. It's going to happen. I know that I've likely offended you. Not intentionally, but I'm guessing it's happened. But love covers a multitude of sins – because in order to maintain constant love for one another we will forgive.

How much? There's this great story in Matthew 18 – Peter, same guy that write this letter – trying to figure out just how many times he has to forgive someone. Thinking he's going above and beyond, he says to Jesus "should I forgive my brother 7 times?" Peter thinks he's trying to raise the bar, right? Jesus says "no, 70 times 7." Now Jesus isn't saying keep score – he's saying forgive freely and readily and quickly.

When Peter, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit says that love covers a multitude of sins, I think it's this type of unrelenting forgiveness that he has in mind. When you love someone, you look past their shortcomings, you allow yourself to be offended, and you forgive – because in Christ you also have been forgiven.

Live like you know how the story ends – also calls us to a biblical view of hospitality.

### **III. Biblical Hospitality**

Now, when we consider hospitality – it's almost impossible to not think about this word through the lens of American culture. We see this word and we think "throw a good party. Entertain well. Whatever" But that's our culture's view of hospitality – that places the

emphasis on the host. Biblically speaking, when we practice Biblical hospitality we place the emphasis on the guest not the host. Meeting needs of our guest – serving and loving them like family – this is the picture of Biblical hospitality.

The word literally translate “love of strangers”. As one pastor that I read has said – not just an act of hospitality but an attitude of love toward strangers.

So what does it look like to live like you know the ending – to be alert, sober minded for prayer, maintain love for one another, be hospitable without complaining, and lastly – **USE YOUR GIFTS FOR THE GOOD OF OTHERS AND THE GLORY OF GOD!**

#### **IV. USE YOUR GIFTS**

Re-Read V10 - Just as each one has received a gift, use it to serve others, as good stewards of the varied grace of God.

When it comes to gifts – there are a couple of things we needed to be crystal clear on:

- Each of us has a gift
  - You may not have discovered your gift, but every follower of Christ has received a gift.
- We are given a gift to USE it.
  - USE the gift
  - Useless unless it's being used
- Gifts are to be used, as a STEWARD
  - Steward or manager doesn't really own it – they just have to MAXIMIZE its use
- Gifts are given to bring glory to God.
  - There's a lot of really bad teaching on spiritual gifts that desires to draw all kinds of crazy attention to the recipient of the gift, rather than God as the giver of all good things.
  - Do I want you to think each week when you leave here “Man, Paul can really preach.” **OR** Do I want you to leave here each week thinking “Man, Jesus is so amazing and glorious.”
  - Hear me – Jesus isn't gonna share the glory due his name with me or you or anybody else.
- Gift envy is real and it is sinful
  - It's especially real in the church.
  - We know this, but we don't really believe it sometimes – but it is a good thing that God has gifted all of us with different gifts

#### **CLOSING:**

How does this make any sense at all??? Hear me – it only makes sense to live this way if you're confident in the ending. Remember the first phrase we looked at today – The end of all things is near. The end is near. Are you confident in the ending?