

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

# The DEVO

JULY 10 - 14, 2023

Sermon Series 5.28 - 8.13

# FORGED

## IN THE FURNACE

# MONDAY

Read **1 Peter 4:1-6; 1 Peter 3:18; Matthew 26:36-45; Philippians 2:5**

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In this series on 1 Peter, our theme is “Forged in the Furnace”: living out our Christian faith in and through suffering. In 1 Peter 4:1, the penman references Christ’s suffering for us during His First Coming. This verse follows from 1 Peter 3:18:

*“Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but He died for sinners to bring you safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but He was raised to life in the Spirit” (1 Peter 3:18).*

God sent His Son, Jesus, to save us from our sins and to be an Example of how to live as God’s people in this world while not of it. Jesus lived sinlessly—something beyond us, though we are called to walk with Him. Jesus came to seek and save the lost—those living apart from God. The suffering of Christ referenced here is out of obedience to the Father and His love for us.

Pastor Tim has preached on how we are called to love others—not just family or neighbors, but all people everywhere. Here Peter recounts Jesus’ suffering amidst His obedience to the Father and extending His love towards us. This first half of verse 1 really focuses on Christ’s suffering through His total devotion to the Father, and His fulfillment of the will of the Father.

First Peter 4:1 suggests that we too, as believers, should be ready to suffer for the gospel's sake. Christ, our Example, did not compromise His obedience to the Father despite His suffering. His suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-45) illustrates the gravity and terror of His trial.

First Peter 4:1b indicates that *“our suffering puts an end to sin.”* Peter here highlights suffering that may result from faithfulness also frees us from sin's grip. The joy we find in knowing Jesus should overshadow the sorrows and pains we may face. A fruit of faithful suffering should be an outpouring of love to others.

## QUESTIONS

Do you relate to Jesus' battle with suffering in Gethsemane?  
What is your response when facing suffering?

## PRAYERS

### For Neighborhood Homework House (NHH)

Recently Neighborhood Homework House hired Darlene Gonzales to serve as its new Teen and Alumni Program Coordinator. She will begin in mid-July and overlap with Darincka Vargas, who has served on the NHH team for three years. Pray for continuity of service to NHH students and their families during this season.

# TUESDAY

Read **1 Peter 4:1-6; John 18:36; Romans 12:2**

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Peter's transition to 1 Peter 4:2 walks us into being fully devoted followers of Jesus. In verse 2 Peter basically suggests our purpose for living will change now that we are Christians following Jesus. No longer shall we be tempted by the temptations of this world, because we have a much more important life focus—God's purposes. This is a very challenging charge Peter gives us. For me, this means I need to be constantly dialed into God's will for me.

As Kylie Dunn preached on Youth Sunday in May, there are times in our lives when this is very evident and easily attainable—in mountain top moments at camps, retreats, Christian community gatherings, mission trips, etc. But in our day-to-day grind of everyday life with work, school, home, caregiving, loneliness, sickness, and sufferings, we are challenged to seek God's purposes and outwardly express our joy and security found in Jesus, turning from our sinful ways.

In the Gospel of John, John cites Jesus' words expressing a higher calling and purpose. *"Jesus said, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, My servants would fight to prevent My arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now My kingdom is from another place'"* (John 18:36 NIV).

In the book of Romans the Apostle Paul, who faced much suffering for his belief and attesting to Christ's way, elaborates how we can be transformed from the temptations of this world by the renewing of

our minds. And by such methods, we will be able to discern God's will for our lives. *"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will"* (Romans 12:2 NIV).

I find 1 Peter 4:2 particularly challenging. These words make so much sense, and they convey what I deeply desire for my life. But this world brings so much busyness and so many distractions that draw me from consistently seeking God's will for my life per what the Apostle Paul and Peter suggest.

## QUESTIONS

Do you consider yourself a fully devoted follower of Jesus? What struggles do you have in consistently seeking God's will for your life?

## PRAYERS

### For Neighborhood Homework House (NHH)

During the week of July 30—August 4, twenty-four teens will go to Mountain Point for a summer camp with Oasis Ministries. This camp is both faith-based and led by people of color. There are many remaining details—coordinating drivers, recruiting counselors, and gathering supplies. Pray for this entire week.

# WEDNESDAY

Read **1 Peter 4:1-6; Galatians 5:19-20**

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Yesterday we were charged by Peter to turn from the ways of this world and live for God's purposes for the rest of our lives. In 1 Peter 4:3, the Apostle provides examples of living in and of the ways of this earthly world, ways we are called to turn from as believers in Jesus. The examples cited by Peter are somewhat alarming, depending upon the biblical translation: sins of sexual desire, wild parties, excessive drinking, and worshipping false gods.

*Eerdmans New Bible Commentary* states these examples from the Greek language and culture as: excessiveness, absence of restraint, lusts, strong desire of any kind, habitual drunkenness, abominable idolatries, unrighteousness, unlawfulness and more. Eerdmans also suggests that these are historic characterizations of how we used to live (before Christ) and that these are now behind us, things forsaken by faithful believers in Jesus Christ.

How interesting that Peter could write of such things so long ago, describing sinful desires of this world that are still unfortunately relevant today! I see this attesting to the continuing relevance of the Bible, even in modern times. Peter writes us instructions for turning from these past, wicked ways.

The Apostle Paul details similar sinful ways in his letter to the Galatians, warning us to turn from such sin: *“The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God”* (Galatians 5:19-21).

First Peter 4:1-6 also describes past sinful desires. His letter is written to believers in a manner suggesting that believers have overcome such sinful temptations, things that we were tempted to pursue before coming to faith in Christ Jesus. Remember that by seeking God’s will in our lives (thereby purposefully renewing our minds and seeking God), these sinful ways dominate our desires and we shall not seek them lustfully or excessively. Instead, we will seek God’s ways and reflect His love to our world.

## QUESTIONS

What helps to draw you closer to God’s will for your life? Are there worldly temptations of lust or excesses that you need God’s help in avoiding?

## PRAYERS

For Neighborhood Homework House (NHH)

This summer NHH hired five students to serve as “Junior Staff” members during the summer. Traditionally, these positions are highly sought after and considered a sort of “rite of passage” for many of NHH students. Pray for these amazing teens and their leadership formation this summer.

# THURSDAY

Read **1 Peter 4:1-6**; **1 Peter 3:15-16**

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In 1 Peter 4:4, Peter writes that people of this world will not understand followers of Jesus and our ability to resist lustful, excessive sins. Peter writes that the unsaved will be surprised by our response, unable to grasp how and why we would avoid such activities. They will even mock or criticize us for living differently. This is a common, worldly response borne out of resistance to change to anything different from the normal or common way of doing things.

Generally speaking, change can be hard to comprehend. Those living apart from Christ can be troubled by our changed response to earthly temptations. *Eerdmans New Bible Commentary* suggests that the people ridiculing us (former associates, “friends” and relatives still living in worldly fashion) do not understand the transformation of someone with a redeemed life in Jesus Christ.

First Peter 4:4 is a warning to us, as the joy, freedom and forgiveness we have found in Jesus Christ—along with our changed life decisions and actions—can provoke unfavorable responses from those not yet knowing Christ. This underlies why Peter stated in the previous chapter: *“But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear*



*conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander” (1 Peter 3:15-16).*

Do not overlook this warning for us, we who follow Christ. We will often be tempted to defend our beliefs and decisions, especially when being ridiculed or otherwise criticized. First Peter 3:15-16 calls us not only to be prepared to share our faith, joy, hope, freedom and forgiveness in Christ, but to witness always with gentleness and respect. We are called to love others and share our faith with love such that others may come to know Jesus Christ as we do, even when they disparage us for the choices we make as Christians. We can be no more like God than when exhibiting how to “love the unlovable.”

## QUESTIONS

Have you ever been challenged or chastised by unbelievers for not partaking in activities that may be overly sinful? If so, how did you respond? Are you comfortable and ready to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope you have?

## PRAYERS

### For Neighborhood Homework House (NHH)

NHH’s new fiscal year began July 1, 2023. This upcoming year NHH is planning to strengthen its services to Azusa families. This increase will require us to raise \$683,525 by June 30, 2024. Pray for NHH’s capacity to continue to be wise stewards of the resources it has been entrusted with. As well, pray for generosity and multiplication of the investment.

# FRIDAY

**Read 1 Peter 4:1-6; Acts 16:31; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18;  
Ephesians 1:4; Romans 8:9-13**

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This week in 1 Peter 4:1-4 we have unpacked some of the attributes that come with the Christian life, following God's will in our lives while experiencing suffering or persecution for resisting or even standing against the ways of this fallen world. First Peter 4:5-6 explains how one day everyone will face judgment for how they have lived, for things said and decisions made. This passage also reminds us that the basis of our salvation is Jesus Christ and saving faith in Him. All will be held accountable for actions before God. Fortunately, for we who follow Christ, He has taken our deserved punishment already at Calvary's cross. Others who have lived apart from Christ, however, will be required to give a full account of things thought, said, and done.

Peter advised his readers that the living and the dead will face judgment one day. There was concern by some during Peter's time that some of the dead passed before having opportunity to learn of Jesus. However, there are multiple passages, like Ephesians 1:4, indicating how God has known His own since before creation. Moreover, God's existence and likeness are evident through creation itself. Therefore, we do not have an excuse for not believing God and living by His ways. *"For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight"* (Ephesians 1:4).

In today's readings from Romans, the Apostle Paul writes we are to live by the Spirit of God, which will put to death the sins of our fleshly bodies. This harmonizes with this week's principal passage, 1 Peter 4:1-6. Peter calls us to live and suffer like Jesus with our new life in Christ so that others may know of the love exhibited to us by our Father. We are called to share the joy, hope, forgiveness and freedom we now experience in the Holy Spirit.

## QUESTIONS

How do you feel about judgment day and having to give account for your actions? Do you regularly revel in the love that God our Father has for us and the joy, hope, forgiveness and freedom we have, made possible through the suffering Jesus did for us?

## PRAYERS

### For Neighborhood Homework House (NHH)

At present NHH is recruiting people to serve on its Board of Directors. Ideal members are Christ followers who understand NHH's mission, bring needed skills, contribute financially, and have the capacity to invest their time in NHH. Preferred skills and demographic characteristics include legal, financial/CPA, fundraising, human resources, Azusa or Glendora resident, Latin, and first-generation college graduate. Pray for the Spirit's direction in this recruitment.

# Sources

- Professor F. Davidson, Ed., *Eerdmans New Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1958).



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