

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

### **A Christian's Duty in a Hostile World**

**1 Peter 4:7-11**

#### **Part Four**

We are waging a great battle. Not against flesh and blood, but against the world forces of darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. The battle is against Satan's kingdom. It is our task to take the battle to the very gates of hell itself and by God's grace prevail. We must understand that this battle will not be easy, but even though many fiery darts will be hurled at us, if we would but do our spiritual duty I know on the basis of God's promises that we will not fail.

I would like to read you an excerpt from a speech given by Winston Churchill in 1940. The British people were at war with Germany and were being pressed hard on every side by the Nazi military machine. Supplies and morale were low. Their national destiny hung in the balance. It was against this backdrop that Winston Churchill said the following:

“To form an administration of this scale and complexity is a serious undertaking in itself, but it must be remembered that we are in the preliminary stage of one of the greatest battles in history, that we are in action at many points in Norway and in Holland, that we have to be prepared in the Mediterranean, that the air battle is continuous and that many preparations have to be made here at home. I would say to the House, as I said to those who have joined this Government: I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat.”

“You ask what is our policy? I will say: It is to wage war, by sea, land, and air with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us: to wage war against a monstrous tyranny, never surpassed in the dark, lamentable, catalogue of human crime. That is our policy. You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in a word: Victory - victory at all costs, victory in spite of all the terror, victory however long and hard the road may be; for without victory, there is no survival.”

“I have, myself, full confidence that if all do their duty, if nothing is neglected even though large tracts of Europe and many old and famous states have fallen or may fall into the grip of the Gestapo and all the odious apparatus of Nazi rule, we shall not flag or fail.”

I can say the same thing to you today. But if we would only do our duty we will as Christ's church neither flag nor fail. Hopefully this morning before you leave this place you will make a fresh commitment to perform your duty as a disciple of Jesus Christ .”

What is our duty? In order to answer this question we can go to **1 Pet. 4:7-11**. We learn much about duty from this passage. We have already learned about a very important incentive in performing our duty. And what was that incentive? Look at **V. 7, “The end of all things is at hand therefore.”** We have discovered that a very important incentive for performing our Christian duty is the knowledge that the **“end of all things is at hand,”** or in other words, Christ's return is **“imminent.”** Following this statement Peter gives us certain instructions that list for us a few of our duties as disciples of Christ.

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

### HE BEGINS WITH OUR DUTY TO THE ONE ABOVE - PRAYER

HE THEN SPEAKS OF OUR DUTY TO ONE ANOTHER - THE OVERARCHING DUTY THAT WE ARE TO PERFORM TOWARD ONE ANOTHER IS TO KEEP FERVENT IN OUR LOVE . Peter then gives to us a number of different ways that our love for one another might express itself.

If we would keep fervent in our love for one another we would experience a desire to cover one another's sin. Why? Because **“love covers a multitude of sins.”** How do we in effect do this? Certainly not by ignoring sin of our brother or sister but rather by personally forgiving it. IF YOU HAVE ANY ANGER OR MALICE TOWARD ANY BROTHER OR SISTER IN CHRIST THIS MORNING IT IS YOUR CHRISTIAN DUTY TO FORGIVE THAT INDIVIDUAL. IT IS YOUR CHRISTIAN DUTY TO COVER THEIR SIN WITH THE BLANKET OF YOUR FORGIVENESS.

Also our love should express itself by showing hospitality. This means we are to reach out in love to Christians who we hardly know or don't know at all. If there are Christian brethren that are here this morning that you do not know and they are strangers to you you cannot remain indifferent toward them. May God give you grace to reach out and introduce yourself to them. May God give you grace to become acquainted with them and their lives. May God give you grace in light of what you come to know about them to love them as the Lord directs your path. Certainly it may be to invite them over to your house to share a meal but hospitality or in other words the love of strangers goes much further than this one expression.

We are now going on to the third expression of love that Peter mentions in this passage that would be expressed toward one another.

If we are going to successfully engage the spiritual forces of darkness in battle and not flag or fail we must not only perform our duty and forgive one another and be hospitable to one another but we must be serving one another. If we fail to do this the church will be weakened and our mission compromised.

Let us read **V. 10, “As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another.”**

First of all we need to define what Peter means by **“gift.”** In order to do this a number of observations need to be made. First of all the term **“gift” (CHARISMA)** is derived from the same root as “grace” and denotes something that has been “freely and graciously, given.” It is therefore something that cannot be earned or deserved Secondly we need to note that the word **“received”** is in the aorist tense and therefore was something these believers already possessed. These gifts were therefore not something to be sought after but rather utilized. This is why it goes on to say, **“as each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another.”**

Looking at the epistles it becomes clear that these gifts that we have received from the Lord could be natural or supernatural endowments.

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

Natural endowment - When I refer to a natural endowment I am talking about the talents, abilities and traits that we received at our physical birth. Those talents, abilities and traits are gifts from the Lord.

A large part of what I bring to this fellowship in respect to service was given to me by the Lord long before I ever became a Christian. Obviously one of the ways I seek to serve you is through speaking. And this modest ability that I have been given to communicate through speech was manifested long before I became a Christian. In grammar school I was asked to MC our graduation ceremonies. In high school I became involved in the NFL not the national football league but National Forensic League. When I was attending our local community college they asked me to represent them on the local high school campuses. In addition to our natural endowments there is also our supernatural endowments.

Supernatural endowment - When I refer to supernatural endowments I am talking about those talents, abilities, and traits that we received at the point of our spiritual birth. When we accepted Christ as our Lord and Savior we were immersed into Christ and sovereignly placed into Christ's body to serve a very specific function. **1 Cor. 12:13** states this very clearly, **“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”** This sovereign placement into Christ's body requires that we possess certain capacities if we are going to function properly. Some of those capacities were given when we were born. But others may need to be added when we are spiritually reborn and placed into Christ's body. These are supernatural endowments.

Let us consider the Apostle Paul. Certainly when the Apostle Paul was still Saul before he became a Christian he was a zealous man. In **Gal. 1:14** when Paul was describing himself before his conversion he said, **“And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.”** This trait defined him as a person. When he became a Christian that zealous trait which was a natural endowment was still present but in addition to this he received a supernatural endowment. For example he was given the ability to speak in tongues. In **1 Cor. 14:18-19** Paul said, **“I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all, (19) however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind, that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue.”** This ability or capacity to speak in tongues was not something he was able to do before his conversion, but only after. Therefore it was a supernatural endowment.

What is a spiritual gift? It is whatever capacity that the Lord has graciously given us in order to minister to the church.

These gifts have been given to each one! What does the verse say? **“As each one has received a special gift.”** There is not a single individual here this morning that has entered into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ that has not received a certain capacity to effectively minister in the church. You might say well I can't lead music. Or I can't preach. Or I can't do this or do that. The issue here is not what you cannot do. The issue here is to recognize what you can do and get about doing it whatever that is.

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

Why is this so important? Because the Lord has designed the church in such a way that we are interdependent. The reflexive pronoun in verse 8 “one another” stresses the mutual benefit of the gifts when they are used for the benefit of the whole body. Certainly General Patton understood the concept of “interdependence.” Patton became famous during the Second World War and distinguished himself by leading the 3rd Army across France and into Germany. While in this process a young soldier was down on his hands and knees in the mud working on a tank. When the youngster turned around and saw the great general, he struggled to get up, yet Patton held him down. Patton said, “You just stay down there son. It is men like you that keep me going.” Just as Patton recognized that the 3rd Army would not have been successful without every individual doing their job, the church must also recognize this. Not only by contributing what they have been given, but also not insisting that every other member of the body of Christ function as they are functioning.

It is no small matter therefore if one or two of those that make up any particular church fellowship are not functioning. It is a very serious thing. Though this fellowship has been wonderfully blessed with many Christians that are giving themselves in service not only to the organization of Valley Bible Church through our programs but also giving themselves in service to the organism ministering to the individual needs of our members we will not be satisfied until every single individual has a ministry mentality.

Look at the next phrase, “**as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.**” A steward was an individual entrusted with the administrative responsibility for household affairs. The entrustment was not made to him for his own enjoyment; he was responsible to use his gift for the benefit of those he served.

God has given to each one of us a certain giftedness which is in this passage called the “**manifold grace of God.**” This is not to be used to serve yourself but rather for the benefit of those you are to serve and who in this passage would that be? It is the church. It is our duty. And as such Peter exhorts us, “**As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another.**” But what is the goal of all of this?

### INTENTION

Let us look at **V. 11, “Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”**

Yes God has given us certain capacities or giftedness in order to minister to building up of the body of Christ but this ministry should ultimately and must result in God being glorified. How in fact would this be accomplished?

Notice that Peter divides up the gifts that we possess into two broad categories, the speaking gifts and then the serving gifts. How can those exercising speaking gifts bring glory to God? It would be by being conscious that what he is saying is God’s message for the occasion.

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

The Lord has brought into my life many opportunities to minister to the church through speaking. In those situations I want to know that my life is fully yielded to Him that His spirit is in control of whatever gifts or abilities that He may have entrusted to me. So that I might know that the end result is totally of His doing and not of my own. This has allowed me to have peace of mind knowing that the utterances, as it were, were the utterances of God. This has been very helpful to me because if the result of my speaking is not obviously positive I do not feel guilty or if more importantly if the result of my speaking is obviously positive I do not take credit.

The same approach is important in the serving gifts. How can those exercising serving gifts bring glory to God? It would be by being conscious that what he is doing is in God's strength. The Lord has brought into my life opportunities to minister to the church through serving as well as speaking. In those situations I want to know that my life is fully yielded to Him that His Spirit is in control of whatever gifts or abilities that He may have entrusted to me. So that I might know that the end result is totally of His doing and not of my own. This allows me to have peace of mind knowing that whatever happens as a result of my efforts is totally of His doing and not of my own. This allows me to avoid guilt if the result is not exactly what I might have expected and it also keeps me from taking the credit when everything goes well.

### CONCLUSION

We are in the midst of a great battle. We are to assault the very gates of hell itself and in doing so many fiery darts will be hurled at us. But if we would just do our duty. I am confident on the basis of the word of God we will not falter or fail.

Therefore in light of the imminent return of Christ. Let us fulfill our duty to the one above. Let us therefore be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.

Therefore in light of the imminent return of Christ. Let us fulfill our duty to one another. Let us therefore keep fervent in our love one for another. And let that love express itself through forgiveness, hospitality, and service..... **“So that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.**