

TITLE: "Armed for Suffering" (Part 2)

PASSAGE: 1 Peter 4:3

THEME: *The time for sinning is past, the time for suffering is now, so suffer well!*

NUMBER: 08081Pe4.3(83)

DATE: August 17, 2008

{{Read Passage}}

[i] In 3:15 we read {cite}

Word "defense" = apologia from which we get our Eng. word "apology." This word doesn't mean apology as in "I'm sorry," but apology as in "Here's my defense for what I believe."

Many of you have heard of t/area of study known as "apologetics" which is a reasoned defense of Christianity's truth claims.

[i] One of the greatest apologetics for the truth of our faith is that genuine Christianity changes lives

It makes a profound difference that transcends what any mere religion can do.

In fact, you can take genuine Christianity which upholds t/primacy of Scripture, t/reality of God's Triunity; fact of man's depravity; salvation from sin solely by God's pure electing grace through our God-given faith in JC as t/one who died for our sin and was resurrected to new life and it stands alone. Everything else is just religion.

From the Duplicity of R.C. w/its legion of pedophile priests; to the Dead legalism of Islam; to t/Illogical subjectivism of new age spirituality; It's all religion without regeneration.

[i] The reality of your testimony is one of the greatest apologetics for truth

That shows itself in many ways. For example, Ask yourself, do I love my brothers and sisters in Christ?

John 13:35 “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

One of t/greatest testimonies to the world is when they can look at us and say, *"Man, I don't know what it is, but those Christians really love one another in a way that defies explanation."*

Ask yourself, do I no longer carry on a love-affair with the world? Am I different?

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 **9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.**

Ask yourself, have others seen t/reality of my faith in X, that it goes beyond words to actions.

Here's t/message of James. Faith w/o works (read a changed life) is dead. IOW - there is a faith, a belief, that does not save. It's a faith that is mere religiosity stripped of t/Spirit's work of transformation.

So, James writes, if you have faith, belief, that shows not only an empty head, but an empty heart, your faith is worthless. You are lost and hellbound.

How does someone else know I have t/reality of genuine saving faith?
How can they look at me and see beyond t/words, "I believe in Jesus."
By what I do. That's what James means when he says that Abraham was vindicated by works when he offered up Isaac on the altar.

[i] The reality of your testimony is one of the greatest apologetics for truth

Philippians 2:14-15 14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing;
15 that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,

[i] The reality of your testimony is one of the greatest apologetics for truth

We've seen that t/o 1 Peter.

1:6-7 - trials and difficulties prove the reality of your faith.

2:9-10 - You are the new Israel of God, a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, so that you can proclaim God's excellencies to a world that lies in darkness.

2:12 - You are to keep your behavior excellent while living among t/pagans around you so that while they slander you, some may see your good works and glorify God on that day.

2:15 - do what's right so that you might silence t/ignorance of t/foolish.

3:16 - keep a good conscience. You're going to be slandered, but if you do well, those who do so will be put to shame.

[i] The reality of your testimony is one of the greatest apologetics for truth

[i] That's also true when it comes to suffering . . .

Suffering is something else we've seen t/o 1 Peter.

The fact that we have been called to salvation means that we have been called to suffer. Not to suffer for t/sake of suffering. We're not spiritual masochists who flagellate themselves into the K.D. We're to suffer for JC. We're to suffer because we're in His army. // we fight against the world, the flesh, and t/enemy of our souls.

[i] Because we're in a battle, we are to be Armed for Suffering

In his book *One Hundred Prison Meditations* Richard Wurmbrand, who spent 14 years in prison as a Romanian pastor, wrote, "I have accepted this proposal. Christians are meant to have the same vocation as their King, that of cross-bearers. It is this [consciousness] of a high calling and of partnership with Jesus which brings gladness in tribulations, which makes Christians enter prisons for their faith with the joy of a bridegroom entering the bridal room."

To sum up what Peter is saying here in 4:1-6 ==>

The time for sinning is past, the time for suffering is now, so suffer well!

To suffer well is to have that [consciousness] of a high calling and of partnership with Jesus which brings gladness in tribulations, which makes Christians enter prisons for their faith with the joy of a bridegroom entering the bridal room.

I. What Does it Mean to be Armed for the Purpose of Suffering? Seven answers to that question . . .

A. To be Armed for the Purpose of Suffering Means We Have Clothed Ourselves With The Attitude of Christ (v 1a)

Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same attitude . . .

1. The same attitude we saw in 2:22-23 {cite}

It's to suffer for doing what is right rather than what is wrong (3:17).

B. To be Armed for the Purpose of Suffering Means We Have Parted Ways With Our Past Life of Sin (v 1b)

... **for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,**

1. In other words, this is evidence of saving faith

When you are willingly armed for the purpose of suffering for JC you give evidence that you possess genuine saving faith. It demonstrates that you have counted all things as loss for His sake and that you have broken from your past life of sin.

As I said last week, It's evidence of Philippians 1:29 in your life ==>
For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,

Resolving that we are willing to suffer indicates that we have ceased to let sin dominate our lives. We are resolved to suffer so that we can live to the will of God.

To quote John Piper:

"In other words, choose suffering because if you don't, you will choose sin. But if you do, you will prove that your bondage to sin has been broken. Get the thought and the purpose in your head that Christ is worth suffering for; live out that conviction when the choice comes between suffering and sin; and in suffering sin will be defeated and you will be triumphant. If you come to the point where you suffer for righteousness' sake, you have ceased from sin—not perfection, but a clean break with the past of sin. That break is described in verse 2: ". . . so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of

men, but for the will of God." When you suffer for what's right, it's a sign that you have renounced sinful human desires and embraced the will of God as a higher value. So for the sake of righteousness and freedom from sin, arm yourselves with this purpose." [John Piper, Arming Yourself with the Purpose to Suffer (sermon on 1 Peter 4:1-6), October 2, 1994]

2. Nothing proves & purifies personal motives like pain does

My motives are proven and purified when what I do isn't all about me and my personal comfort or self-interests. If I am willing to serve JC when it hurts me, I have demonstrated that I have made a break with sin. He really is my Master. I am not my own.

Job - "Even though He slay me, I will trust in Him!"

Thirdly ==>

C. To be Armed for the Purpose of Suffering Means We Are Engaged in the Pursuit of God's Will, Not Our Own (v 2)
for as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men but for the will of God.

1. Note the connection . . .

Christ suffered. Arm yourselves with the same mind-set. The one who suffers in the flesh has broken from sin. So that he might live the rest of his life for the will of God, not for the sinful desires of men.

Oswald Chambers once wrote ==>

" . . . to choose God's will even if it means suffering is a very different thing. No healthy saint ever chooses suffering [that is, for the sake of suffering]; he chooses God's will, as Jesus did, whether it means suffering or not."

I. What Does it Mean to be Armed for the Purpose of

Suffering?

A. *We Have Clothed Ourselves With The Attitude of Christ*

(v 1a)

B. *We Have Parted Ways With Our Past Life of Sin* (v 1b)

C. *We Are Engaged in the Pursuit of God's Will, Not Our*

Own (v 2)

That brings us to verse 3 and our 4th point ==>

D. *to be armed for the purpose of suffering means We Know*

the Season for Sinning is Past (v 3)

For the time already past is sufficient [for you] to have carried out the desires of the pagans, while having pursued licentiousness, lusts, drunkenness, partying, drinking binges, and lawless idolatries.

"This passage is a vivid description of the tragic and devastating life pattern of the unconverted, which ends inexorably in judgement."

[MacArthur, 228]

YES - It describes the tragic and devastating life pattern of the unconverted BUT it also establishes the fact that the converted know that old life pattern is in the past.

Could go all the way back to 1:14 **As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts {which were yours} in your ignorance,**

1. Again, here is where the lines are drawn between the old life and the new

For the time already past is sufficient [for you] to have carried out [pagan desires]

2. Some translations use the word, "Gentiles"

(to have carried out the desires of the Gentiles). The word ἔθνος probably best translated "pagans" as the NIV does.

Not all of the Gentiles would have given approval of the sins that Peter lists in this verse. Seneca, for example, devoted a lengthy tract on the evils of drunkenness (Epistle 83).

a. Same word we saw in 2:12

These are pagan desires.

3. Peter is drawing a contrast

a. Here in verse 3 he uses the word βούλημα - the intentions or purposes of lost sinful men

b. The contrast is to verse 2 where he uses the word θελήμα - the will of our Holy God

One group lives for themselves; the other group lives for X.
One group does their own thing; the other group does God's.

Here's a stark contrast, like day and night, between the will of God and the desires of pagans.

There is a marked difference between believers and unbelievers, between the regenerate and unregenerate. One lives for the will of God, the other for the will of self.

Every so often I hear of a professed believer who chucks the whole thing to go back into a life of sin. I knew of a woman who had a family

and small children. She left her husband and her children, started hanging out with pagans, going to the bars and sleeping around.

What does that prove? It proves that such a person has not made a break with sin. They are not armed to suffer. They have not counted the cost. Whatever faith they claim to have is demon-faith. They have made themselves a friend of the world and are, therefore, God's enemy (James 4:4). In short, they may have been religious, but they never were regenerate.

Ephesians 2:1-10 1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, that no one should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Believer, that old life is gone. It's been crucified with X so that the life you now live by faith is X in you, the one who loves you and delivered Himself up for you! You are a new creation. The old things are past, the new is here.

D. We Know the Season for Sinning is Past (v 3)

4. Look at verse 3 and the way Peter frames this point ==>

For the time already past is sufficient [for you] to have carried out the desires of the pagans . . .

a. Arm yourself with this thought: any amount of past sinning is enough!

If you sinned a little before you believed, it's enough. If you sinned a lot and for many years before you believed, it's enough.

You can never sin so little that you could say, "I need some more time to sin."

How shall we who died to sin still live in it? asks Paul in Rom. 6:2.

Sufficient time has past! No time to waste! Life is short, you've spent enough time in sin!

b. This was a powerful reminder for Peter's readers

These were mostly first-generation Gentile Christians. They were in t/world of pagans & lived like t/world of pagans - until X found them & they were saved.

My own testimony is one of salvation out of paganism.

My wife's testimony is salvation while being raised in a Christian home.

True for many of you. You really didn't know a godless life. You were raised in a Christian home under the guidance of Christian parents who followed t/Bible.

But no doubt, while you may never have indulged in the world's fruit, you've tasted it. All of us are tempted in that regard.

It's enough. We've had our fill. We don't need to sow our wild oats so to speak.

c. That's especially tempting for young people raised in Christian homes

You get to the age where you say, "Gee, I never got to do that. I kind of like the world. I like being in the cool crowd. I want to dress provocatively; I want to show off my cleavage; Maybe I'll get some tattoos and go to the clubs and have some real fun!"

(1) Here is defining moment of your life

Is that faith you learned and professed real? Does the life of X really beat w/i your breast?

You come to an intersection of your life and there's two roads - one is narrow and it leads to life; the other is wide and it leads to eternal ruin.

And if your faith is real, the Scripture cries out within you ==>

15 Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever. [1 John 2:15-17]

For the time already past is sufficient [for you] to have carried out [those sinful desires] . . .

Even as a believer, we need to recognize that each minute of your life

that remains is going to be spent in t/pursuit of God or Self. Remember verse 2 {cite}. Don't reach t/end of your life only to say, "*Why did I waste so much time on nothing!*"

D. to be armed for the purpose of suffering means We Know the Season for Sinning is Past (v 3)

5. What follows are six types of sin - 3 of them are personal & 3 are social in nature

These are the kinds of things that serve as bait for the world // the depraved masses chase after like a hungry fish chasing down a shiny lure at t/end of an angler's line.

Here's a list that sounds like the Animal House of a college campus (or most any workplace).

a. First we have "licentiousness"

This is a word that refers to a lack of moral restraint. One writer describes it as those things which "*excite disgust and shock public decency.*"-^[Wuest]

We wonder nowadays what's left that can *excite disgust and shock public decency!* There's not a whole lot of public decency left to be shocked!

The Genie is out of the bottle and the standard is gone.

There is no moral restraint because the standard for that moral restraint has been thrown overboard like useless cargo.

Yet, as I've said many times, man cannot live that way. Francis

Schaeffer said years ago that men want two things and they will do most anything to guard these two things, personal peace and prosperity. They want peace (not peace as in a lack of war but peace as in a peaceful existence) and prosperity (they want a comfortable standard of living). Men will sell their liberties, if need be, to have these things.

But there is no personal peace and prosperity apart from laws. IOW - anarchy breeds chaos.

But if you strip away the standards, the absolutes, that have been inscripturated by God, you have just that: anarchy and chaos. To keep that from happening governments have to enact more laws and strip away more liberties. To keep the peace & hope for prosperity.

There are no crimes per se in the animal world. If one animal wants something that another animal has, what does it do? It takes it. Survival of the strongest.

What if we lived that way?

I saw parked car the other day that had a bumper sticker that said, "Man is an Ape" along with another message touting the genius of Darwinsim.

Whenever I see that sort of thing I wonder what it would be like to wait for that person to come back to their car so that I could demand that they give me the keys. If they don't, perhaps I will push him or her to the ground and take their car. After all, we are just apes and that's the sort of thing that happens in the ape world.

But I have a feeling that such an individual would say that what I did was wrong, or downright evil. So much for Darwinian ethics.

b. Along with "licentiousness" we have "lusts"

ἐπιθυμία - a word that is used of strong desires of various kinds. Could be sexual. Could be Material in t/form of greed for power or money.

Same word is used in 1:14 of those "lusts" that we are no longer to be conformed to.

c. drunkenness

Interesting word that's only used here: οἶνοφλυγίαις, Compound of οἶνος (word for wine) & φλυγία. (boil up, or overflow).

Drunkenness is listed as a deed of the flesh in Galatians 5:21. And, along with 1 Cor. 6 marks one out as exempt from the KD.

d. And then with "drunkenness" there is "partying" (the first of the 3 "social sins" listed)

Word that's used here, in Gal. 5:21 and Rom.13:13 where it's translated "carousing."

It's the word κώμος which is related to t/word for "village." Idea is a "village festival."

Common within this first century culture to have parties that would last all night. There would be heavy drinking. Men would pursue slave women and boys. And there was even a religious aspect with t/worship of pagan gods and spirits.

English historian, George Grote, in his "History of Greece" writes of these village festivals:

"Crowds of women, clothed with fawns' skins . . . abandoned themselves to demonstrations of frantic excitement, with dancing and clamorous

invocation of the god. They were said to tear animals limb from limb, to devour the raw flesh, and to cut themselves without feeling the wound. The men yielded to a similar impulse by noisy revels in the streets, sounding the cymbals and tambourine, and carrying the image of the god in procession." [Grote, History of Greece, cited by Vincent, 660]

(1) This sort of thing isn't confined to the dusty pages of history

I have a friend who is Brazilian and who tells me that the mind cannot imagine the debauchery that occurs during the festival of Carnival.

Even this has its religious connection. Carnival is held 4 days before Ash Wednesday and marks the beginning of Lent. During Lent, Roman Catholics are supposed to abstain from bodily pleasures, including the consumption of meat.

Here is a chance to do the opposite of what Peter says in verse 3 (time for sinning is past) and to sin with reckless abandon.

One tourism promotion for the city of Rio de Janeiro reads:

To truly experience Rio, however, visit during its annual Carnival, a weeklong festival of parades, music and masquerades that brings Rio's flesh and fantasy culture to a boiling point. Bring plenty of sun and fun protection.

Britain's newspaper, the Sun wrote following this year's Carnival:

NEARLY naked dancers and imaginative floats got Rio de Janeiro's annual carnival off to a sizzling start . . . The annual samba parades is the highlight of the five-day pre-Lent celebrations that take place in Brazil's streets. More than 50,000 people watched the colourful procession which lasted until nearly dawn. Dancers marched and span along the route as crowds cheered on the extravaganza. Love [?] was

also in the air as nearly 20 million free condoms were distributed during the celebrations . . . (while another city handed out morning after pills)."

[<http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/news/article760393.ece>]

Lest I forget, we in the United States have "Mardi Gras" (French for Fat Tuesday). Mardi Gras is the final day of Carnival and the day before Ash Wednesday. French Catholic Influence in N.O.

Among other things that occur during Mardi Gras, young men toss colored beads to young women from balconies as a reward for their being especially immodest.

e. Then we have drinking binges

In Isaiah chapter 5, the prophet proclaims first-hand judgement on the nation of Israel with a series of "woes."

11 Woe to those who rise early in the morning that they may pursue strong drink; Who stay up late in the evening that wine may inflame them!

18 Woe to those who drag iniquity with the cords of falsehood, And sin as if with cart ropes;

20 Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And clever in their own sight!

22 Woe to those who are heroes in drinking wine, And valiant men in mixing strong drink;

(1) Did you know that in an average year over 1000 people die from alcohol poisoning?

Just a few weeks ago a man in FL died following 23 shots of Vodka

Alcohol poisoning is a cause of death in college campuses across the country.

Southern Methodist University - a first year student died with a blood alcohol level over 5x the legal limit. He was 19 years old.

In Minn. a female student aged 20 died after witnesses said she drank continuously from 11 in the morning until she passed out after midnight.

Recently, an 18 year old in TX drank himself to death celebrating his acceptance into a fraternity. His friends not only encouraged him to keep on drinking, they also covered his body with obscene messages and drawings with a marker.

A relatively new craze that's likely to kill you is what's known as an alcohol enema. Because of the intestine's ability to readily absorb alcohol and continue to do so a small amount ingested that way can kill you as it did a 58 year old man who had a BAL of .47 % from receiving sherry wine in that fashion.

All of these deaths were listed as accidental. Wooops! Accidental? Sad. Tragic. The height of foolishness.

f. Lastly, Peter adds==>

. . . and lawless idolatries.

Not lawless idolatries in comparison with lawful ones. Emphasis is on the violation of God's law and sums up the idea that all sin is idolatry in one form or another.

These are the things we once pursued in life. Now, we're engaged in t/pursuit of God's will and pleasure.

D. to be armed for the purpose of suffering means We Know the Season for Sinning is Past (v 3)

Does that mean we don't sin? No. It doesn't mean that. If anyone says he has no sin, he's a liar, John says, and the truth is not in him.

This means we continue the fight. We are new creations in Christ, yet we strive to throw off that which still corrupts us. We are changed, yet yearn for our transformation to be complete.

I'll finish with this quote from one of the Puritans of ages past ==>
"Although you are done with sin, yet there is still fighting, and sin will be molesting you. Although sin is mortally wounded, it still struggles for life and seeks to wound its enemy. It will assault the graces that are in you. Do not think, if it is hit once, it will no longer stir. So long as you live in the body, traces of your natural corruption remain. So you must be armed against it. Sin will not give you any rest as long as there is one spark, of life left in it. This will continue as long as you have life here. This old man is stout and will fight to the death.

God's children often find that this is true, to their grief. The corruptions they thought had been killed and did not stir, and therefore they no longer thought about, revive so much that they attack them and possibly defeat them once again. Therefore, it is necessary to be in a constant state of aler and not to remove any armor until the day you die, until you put off the body and are altogether free of it. You may take the Lord's promise for victory to apply to the end, and it will not fail. But do not promise yourself an easy way, for that will not happen. If you are sometimes under great attack, do not think all is lost. Those who have

been wounded in the fight have often won the day. Do not think that just because you will have the victory, there will be no fight."

However, Christians are different, he adds.

"Those who walk in these ways of impiety but still want to be called Christians shame the Christians. They are enemies of Jesus Christ. They appear to have taken on his name for no other purpose but to shame it and disgrace it. But Christ will vindicate himself and will blot out these impudent people who dare show themselves in God's church as part of it. In reality they are nothing other than spots and blots. They dare to pretend to worship God as his people, and yet remain unclean, profane people. How can you say, "There goes the drunk Christian," or "There goes the earthly-minded Christian?" [Leighton, 180]

Maybe we could add, "There goes the fornicating Christian." Or there goes the homosexual Christian or // adulterous // immodestly dressed // foul-mouthed //

So we end this verse anyway, on the same note w/which we began.

[c] The reality of your testimony is one of the greatest apologetics for truth

Turn if you would over to 1 Thess. {1:2-9}

That's the spirit // being armed for suffering to the glory of God and the joy of His own.