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LIVING FOR GOD'S GLORY: Salvation, Suffering and Serving

Text: 1 Peter 4:1-11



Proposition/Hinting Point:

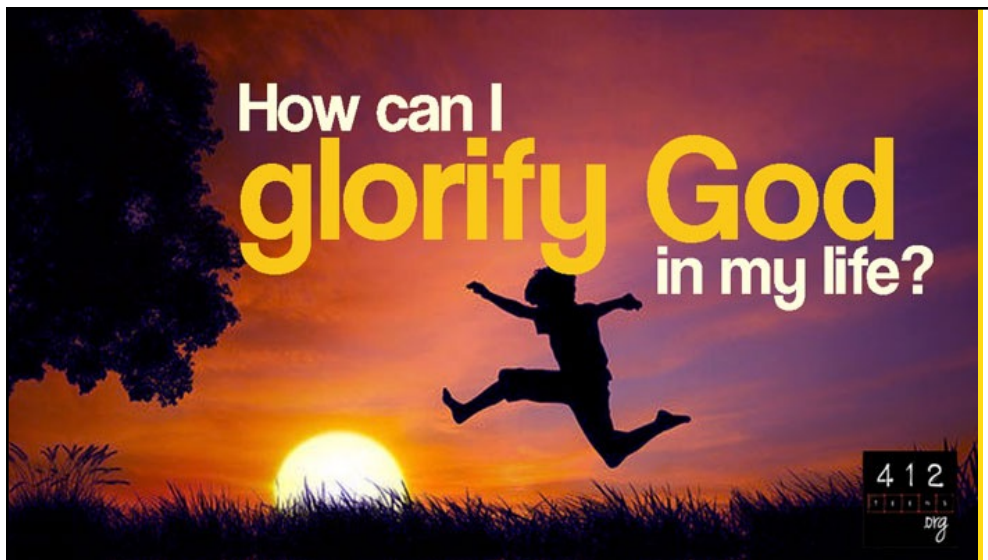
Believers are called to live holy lives, not according to their own desires, but for the glory of God by embracing Christ's mindset, cultivating love and hospitality, and using their gifts to serve others.

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Introduction

1 Peter 4:1-11 is a rich passage that addresses the Christian life in light of Christ's suffering, the hope of salvation, and the call to live in community as the Church. Peter writes to a persecuted audience, encouraging them to endure suffering, live holy lives, and serve one another in love, hospitality and praying. This passage provides a profound theological framework for understanding suffering, salvation, and ecclesiology (the theology of the Church).

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A. Embracing Christ's Like-mind (Vv. 1-6)

1. No longer living according to Fleshly Desires (Vv. 2-5).

Break free from sinful habits (1 Cor. 6:12-20) .

A call to live differently from the world.

In verses 2-4, Peter contrasts the Christian's new life with the old life of sin. Believers are no longer to live for human passions but for God's will. This often leads to misunderstanding and persecution from the world, but Peter assures them that God will judge rightly (v. 5).

Romans 12:2: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

John 15:18-19: "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."

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2. Enduring Suffering with Thanksgiving (V.2b,). (1 Thess. 5 :18, Eph. 5, :15-20).

Suffering is a tool s for spiritual growth and Purification of the Church.

Peter frames suffering as a means of breaking away from sin and aligning oneself with God's will. Just as Christ suffered to accomplish redemption, believers are called to endure suffering as part of their sanctification.

Romans 5:3-4: "Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope."

James 1:2-4: "Count it all joy, my brothers and Sisters, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness."

Rom. 8:17, Philippians 3:10-11, 2 Corinthians 1:5, 1 Peter 4:12-13

2 Corinthians 4:10-11, Colossians 1:24

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When Emperor Antoninus Pius (or the Roman governor) ordered **Saint Polycarp**, the Bishop of Smyrna, to deny Christ and swear loyalty to Caesar, Polycarp famously replied:

"For eighty-six years, I have served Him, and He has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King and my Savior?"

Despite threats of being burned alive, Polycarp remained steadfast in his faith. When the flames did not consume him as expected, he was finally executed by a spear. His martyrdom, recorded in *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*, remains a powerful testimony of unwavering faith in Christ.

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Ignatius of Antioch (c. 35–110 AD)

Statement: *"Let me be food for the wild beasts, through whom I can reach God. I am God's wheat, and I am ground by the teeth of wild beasts so that I may be found pure bread of Christ."*

Persecution: Thrown to lions in the Colosseum for refusing to renounce his faith.

Cyprian of Carthage (c. 200–258 AD)

Statement: *"A Christian should never be afraid to suffer for Christ."*

Persecution: Beheaded for his unwavering faith.

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So many in the church today (Especially prosperity Gospel churches) seem to think that participation with Christ means only Easter Sunday, only participation in aspects of resurrection and glory.

They forget that it is a package deal: suffering and death are the necessary twin of resurrection and glory.

Thus suffering is not something to be avoided, but in fact something to be welcomed and embraced.

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Eternal perspective on suffering and judgment

Verse 6 reminds us that the gospel was preached even to those who have died, emphasizing the eternal hope that transcends earthly suffering. This perspective helps believers endure trials, knowing that their ultimate destiny is secure in Christ.

Q=How do we view suffering in our lives? Do we see it as a tool for spiritual growth or as something to avoid at all costs?

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3. Living Prayerfully and Watchfully

Stay alert and pray without ceasing (Vv. 4-7, 1 Thess. 5:17).

Watch and pray so that you may not fall into temptation Matt. 26:41

Believers in Christ are to continue in prayer with thanksgivings, and intercession for self, family, neighbors, government and the world.

E.M. Bounds (1835–1913)

Prayer Life: Spent **hours daily in prayer**, often beginning before dawn.

Legacy: Wrote extensively on prayer, emphasizing its power in Christian life.

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John Hyde ("Praying Hyde") (1865–1912)

Prayer Life: Sometimes prayed **all night**, often crying out, *"Give me souls, O God, or I die!"*

Missionary Work: Served in India, where revival broke out due to his intercession.

David Brainerd (1718–1747)

Prayer Life: Often prayed **for entire nights**, sometimes in freezing conditions.

Missionary Work: Ministered among Native Americans with great passion.

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George Müller (1805–1898)

Prayer Life: Spent **at least 4 hours daily in prayer** and recorded **over 50,000 answered prayers**.

Missionary Work: Cared for thousands of orphans without ever soliciting funds, relying solely on prayer.

Hudson Taylor (1832–1905)

Prayer Life: Prayed **several hours a day**, often rising before dawn.

Missionary Work: Founded the China Inland Mission, bringing the gospel to inland China.

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Adoniram Judson (1788–1850)

Prayer Life: Spent **hours daily in prayer and Bible study** despite persecution.

Missionary Work: Translated the Bible into Burmese and endured imprisonment for the gospel.

Amy Carmichael (1867–1951)

Prayer Life: Spent **early mornings and late nights in prayer**.

Missionary Work: Rescued thousands of girls from temple prostitution in India.

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B. Living in with the New Mindset (Vv. 8-9)

1. Loving one another deeply (8)

Peter emphasizes that love covers a multitude of sins (v. 8). This love is not merely emotional but practical, demonstrated through hospitality and service (v. 9). It is a Christ-centred and selfless love.

John 13:34-35: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

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2. Showing hospitality without Grumbling (9),

Hospitality is a key virtue in the Bible, reflecting God's love and generosity. It involves opening our hearts and homes to others, especially those in need, without complaining or reluctance.

Romans 12:13

"Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality."

Luke 14:12-14

"When you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

Jesus teaches that true hospitality is selfless, focusing on those who cannot reciprocate, and it brings eternal blessings.

Timothy 3:2, Mark 9:41

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Mark 9:41

"Truly I tell you, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to the Messiah will certainly not lose their reward."

Even small acts of kindness and hospitality, done in Jesus' name, are valued by God.

1 Peter 4:9

"Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling."

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C. Serving One Another (Vv.10-11)

Peter concludes this section by highlighting the importance of serving within the Church. He writes, *"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace"* (v. 10).

1. The Church as a Community of Gifted Servants

Using Your gifts to serve others (10).

Serve wholeheartedly as for the Lord (Col. 3:23-24)

Every believer has been given spiritual gifts by God, not for personal glory but for personal growth in Christ and for the edification of the Church.

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2. Speaking the very Words of God (11).

"If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God."

This verse emphasizes the responsibility to align our speech with God's truth, ensuring that our words honor Him and edify others. Our words have the power to build up or tear down, and as believers, we are called to speak in a way that reflects God's truth, love, and wisdom.

Ephesians 4:29

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."

Our words are to be seasoned with healing, life-giving and meaningful.

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3. Serving with God's Strength (11).

Serving others is a central part of the Christian life, but we are called to rely on God's strength rather than our own.

"If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ."(11).

Philippians 4:13

"I can do all this through Him who gives me strength."

Our ability to serve and overcome challenges comes from Christ, not ourselves.

Isaiah 40:29-31

"He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."

God provides supernatural strength to those who trust in Him.

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Question :

What spiritual gifts has God given us, and how are we using them to serve others?

Are we contributing to the health and growth of our local church, or are we content to be a passive observer?

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we thank You for the hope we have in Christ, even in the midst of suffering and trails of life. Help us to live with an eternal perspective, using our gifts to serve one another and bring glory to Your Holy name. Please strengthen us by Your Spirit to endure trials and to love others so that we may edify each other and glory your name together. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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Once Peter was ready to give life for Christ but rejected Him during Christ's trial.

Once Peter was ready to follow Christ at any cost but after the Death of Christ stepped back to His former profession. The resurrection power of Christ and His unconditional love led Peter to reconciate and restart His fellowship with Christ.

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