

## 1 Peter 4:7-19 Week 21

### Facts About Attitudes and Furnaces

1 Peter 4:7 The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. 8 Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. 9 Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. 10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. 11 If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. 12 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. 14 If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 15 If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. 16 However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. 17 For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 And, "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, What will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" 19 So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

- This declaration is unmistakably designed to support and ENCOURAGE them in their trials.
- Peter is also STIMULATING them to lead a holy life.
- The traditions that were biblically wrong were coming to an end by one of the most pointed JUDGEMENTS that ever fell upon any nation or people.
- There was no covering of PROTECTION on Israel after the death of Christ because of unbelief.
- The cruelty of nations against Israel was a furnace of \_\_\_\_\_ brought on not just God's judgment but because of their own CHOICES.
- The judgment of America is because of our own lack of faith and UNBELIEF.
- Most of our suffering in America has come in the form of VERBAL ABUSE.
- Peter has already told us to arm ourselves with the same ATTITUDE as Christ.
- Today the church that is lacking LOVE and common purpose, the church where spiritual lifeline of communication with God is broken, will be WEAKENED and destroyed by the forces that stand against God's Word.

- Life and LOYALTY between believers is an absolute if the church is to flourish.

Peter shares several things for us to do:

1. The first priority is PURPOSEFUL prayer.  
Peter calls us to be clear-MINDED and self-controlled.  
Clear-minded, I think, means to pray INTELLIGENTLY.
2. The next priority is FORGIVING love.  
Several things it does:
  - It REFUSES to see others' small faults.
  - It shows SYMPATHY for those seeking to get things right.
  - It makes sure its ATTITUDE in the furnace is glorifying God.
  - The call is to love UNCONDITIONAL.
  - Agape love always seeks the GOOD for the other person.
  - The evidence of agape love is ACTION---not words.
  - Agape love shows itself also by SACRIFICE.
  - Peter already told us this kind of love must be shown DEEPLY.  
The word means to be STRETCHED.  
This real love shows itself with HOSPITALITY.
3. The final priority is intense SERVING.  
Serving allows God's GRACE to flow through us, giving life to others.

Final thoughts:

- Take seriously your struggle with SIN and your commitment to obedience.
- Establish clear moral BOUNDARIES in your life that are based on the clear teachings of the bible.
- Be deeply COMMITTED to prayer, forgiveness, hospitality and ministry in the church and your home.
- Don't be SURPRISED when you face trials and suffering or even criticism.
- Search for the positive meaning and purpose that God has for you when life is hard.

You will either be a river that life flows through or you become like the Dead Sea, just a holding pond--stagnant.