

The End of All Things Is at and

Sunday, August 27th, 1989

1 Peter 4: 7-13

“But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”

I want to speak to you today, on this subject: “The End of All Things Is At Hand.” We are going to be reading from First Peter Chapter Four verses 7 through 13. This is the epistle of First Peter Chapter Four, verse 7. You find it in your Bible and let me make a few comments while you are turning to the Scripture.

For some reason people do not like to think and to talk about death and dying, they just don’t. They don’t want to be reminded that we are a dying people. Old Richard Baxter once made this statement, he said: “I preach as one who may never preach again. I preach as a dying man to dying men.”

People will joke about death. They will joke about death; they will joke about heaven and they will joke about hell. They will even buy insurance to provide for their families in the event that they die. If something happens to them, they want their wife and children well provided for.

They pause to pay tribute to people who have died. They do not want to talk about dying themselves. They don’t want you to talk about it and they don’t want to be reminded of it. If you start preaching about death or talking about death and discussing death, they always say, “Let’s not talk about that; let’s talk about something brighter and more joyful.”

My friends, death is real. Death is not uncommon. Death is not unusual. In fact, it is the common lot of all people. Why are we so shocked when someone dies? Somebody may say, “So and so died; did you hear that so and so died?” They are shocked. Why are you shocked? Everybody dies. Why do we avoid this subject? I just don’t know.

The Bible tells us that we will die. I was reading this morning in Genesis Chapter Five. It lists all of these men starting with Adam, Enoch, Seth and all of these different people. In Chapter Five of Genesis it tells us about all of our fathers. After each name it tells how long he lived, and three words, "*and he died.*" Adam lived so many years "*and he died.*" Seth lived so many years "*and he died.*" It says that about all of them. "*And he died*" is the common lot of all men. The Bible tells us we will die.

In Second Samuel 14, it says; "*We must die. We are like water spilt on the ground which cannot be gathered up again.*" Job said this in Chapter Seven "*Is there not an appointed time to man on the earth? I shall soon sleep in the dust.*" David wrote in Psalm 89, listen to this; "*What man is he that liveth and shall not die? Shall he deliver his soul from the grave?*" Then, the writer of Hebrews says this; "*It is appointed unto men once to die.*" The instrument of death is already prepared. You will die and I will die.

Not only does the Bible tell us that we shall die but our bodies remind us that we are dying. Do any of you wear glasses? I do. Do any of you have a failing ear? Are you getting hard of hearing? I am. Is your strength fading? Is your hair turning gray? Are there wrinkles on your brow? Life is slipping away; do you realize that? Your body is telling you this, "You're dying; you are a dying person."

You are not always going to live on this earth. You are marching toward the grave. Your heart, every time it beats, is one beat nearer to death. That is what our bodies are telling us. The Bible tells us that, our bodies tell us that and experience reminds us of that.

How many out there listening to me has a mother, a dad, brothers and sisters, even your children are dead? When I grew up there were five members of my family. There was my mother, my father, my brother, my sister and I. Three of them are dead. My mother and father are dead. My brother is dead and my sister and I alone have survived.

My oldest son is dead. There are so many of my friends that are dead. I have been pastor here in this city for almost 40 years at this same church. Just think how many of the members of this church I have buried. There have been so very, very many. Our friends are dying. In history, and experience, all men have died.

I can't say anything new on this subject; I realize that. When I prepared this message I knew that I wasn't going to be able to say anything that I haven't already said on this program many, many times. I've tried to get people interested in knowing Christ, believing Christ and loving Christ. I've tried to prepare them to meet God.

For those of you who have ears, I'm going to deal one more time with this subject. This may be the last time that I deal with it. I may be gone before next Sunday morning; I do not know.

I want us to look at First Peter Chapter 4:7. Let me point out some of the things that the Apostle Peter has to say about our attitude, about our conduct, about our thoughts and behavior in the light of death, in the light of approaching death. We will soon die. This is the way that he starts this Scripture. Look at First Peter Chapter 4:7. Listen to how he starts. He says in verse 7, "*The end of all things is at hand.*"

We are not talking about the end of the world. We are not talking here about the end of the universe. We are talking about your end and my end. That is what we are talking about. You see; the end is near. It is much nearer than it was yesterday. It is nearer than when I began this message. The end is near.

Life is a vapor. James says, "*What is your life? It is even a vapor.*" Job said, "*What is your life? It is a shadow; quickly it vanishes away.*" What is your life? It is a flower. It is blooming today and withering and dying, gone tomorrow. The place thereof shall know it no more. What is your life?

Here is an interesting comparison. Psalm 90:9 says, "*For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told.*" Life is but a tale that is told. Do you remember old so and so? See, you are telling a tale. You might say, "I remember him, he's been dead for how many years?" We might say, "Two, three, four, maybe five years." You'll probably say, "Oh I remember him." It is just a tale that is told.

Watch this next verse: He says, "*The end is near. The end of all things is at hand.*" He gives us five or six things. He says first of all, "*Be ye therefore sober, serious about this matter and call on God; watch unto prayer.*"

The end is near, so let's be serious about it. Let's quit joking about it and let's quit acting foolish about it. Let's get serious about this matter and call on God. This is not a game. This is not something to joke about and take lightly. You are dying! Life will soon be over. Judgment is staring you in the face. Eternity is near. We are going out to meet a Holy God. "*The end is near.*" So, He said, "*Be serious about it and call on God.*"

We are not talking about the formalities here. You say, "Well, I pray." We are not talking about the formality of prayer. We are not talking about occasionally acknowledging that there is a God. We are not talking about just going to church on

Sunday. We are just not talking about a religious side line. We are talking about calling on God. *“The end is near; the end is at hand, therefore, be serious and call on God.”*

Call on God for mercy. Call on God for pardon. Call on God for grace. Call on God like the Publican did in the temple, who smote on his breast and called, *“O God be merciful to me the sinner.”* Call on Him like Bartimaeus who would not be silent, who would not be intimidated by these people about him. They said to him, “Hush, hush!” He cried out the more, *“Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.”* Jesus stood still and had mercy on him.

What about the thief on the cross? He was facing death at that very moment. What if he had not called on God? What if he had not seriously faced his situation? He said, “Well, I am a sinner; I am getting what I deserve.” He said to the other thief, *“Don’t you fear God seeing that we are in the same condemnation and we indeed justly are getting what we deserve? This man has done nothing amiss. Lord, you are not going to stay dead; you are coming into a kingdom; Lord, remember me when you come into Your kingdom.”* That is calling on God. That’s what I’m talking about.

My friend; listen to me. I’ve been around a long time and I’ve watched some people die. I have preached a lot of funerals. You are going to die alone. That’s right! This is not an experience that anyone else can share with you. We don’t die in groups, we don’t die in bands, and we don’t die in assemblies; we die alone. We meet God alone.

“Every man shall give an account of himself to God.” I can’t share this experience with you and no one else can share this experience with you. *“The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be serious and call on God.”*

Since you are going to die alone and meet God alone and since you are going to enter judgment alone, wouldn’t it be wise for you now, to get alone with God and seek forgiveness? Wouldn’t it be wise for you to get out of these large assemblies, quit walking the aisles, quit carrying on and making professions? Wouldn’t it be wise for you to quit praying around all of these benches and having folks around you? You are going to die alone. You are going to meet God alone.

You are going to give an account of yourself to God alone as if you were the only son of Adam that ever walked upon this earth. When they pull the shades and the doctor looks at his watch and turns to the family and shakes his head, you are going to be as alone as you have ever been. You are going to be alone and meet God alone.

I'll tell you this, as Peter says here; *"Let's be serious and call on God."* I mean to get alone with God. Christ said, *"Enter into your closet, and shut the door and settle this matter"*. You may say that you have made a profession. Well, that is a lot of your problems. You need to get alone with God.

All right, watch the second thing in verse 8: *"The end of all things is at hand. Let's be sober, serious, and call on God. Above all things, let's have fervent love among yourselves."* That is what it says here in verse 8. You see, *"God is love. Let us love one another for love is of God."* That is Godliness. Love is Godliness. *"Everyone that loveth is born of God and knows God and he that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love."*

You might say, "I wonder why the Apostle Peter, in talking about death and meeting God, says; *"The end is at hand, the end is near, be serious and call on God."* The very next thing he says is, *"Have fervent, genuine, sincere love among yourselves because to know God is to love."* That is what it says; *"God is love. He that loveth not knoweth not God for God is love."*

All the law of God is fulfilled in one word, *"love."* They asked our Lord, *"What is the greatest law?"* He said, *"The whole law is summed up in two: "Love God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength and love your neighbor as yourself. By this shall all men know that you are My disciples if you love one another."* This is the mark and evidence of a disciple, he loves Christ and he loves Christ's people. That is right!

He mentions fervent love. *"Above all things have fervent love among yourselves."* What is fervent love? Well, it means genuine. It is not make-believe; it is genuine and not hypocritical. It is genuine and sincere. It is not love in word only, it is heart love. It is a genuine, sincere heart love for Jesus Christ and for others. I ask, how can we be otherwise if I would but remember the love of God to me? Why would it be difficult for me to demonstrate that love?

If I would but remember the grace of God to me, why would it be difficult for me to show grace to others? If I would but remember the mercy of God to me, then why would it be difficult for me to show that love, grace and mercy to others? That is the reason He says, *"He that loveth not, knoweth not God."*

Have fervent love. This is evidence that you have called on God and that you have been heard. *"For love, covereth a multitude of sins,"* He said. His love to me covered a multitude of sins and still does. True love to others will do the same.

What does it mean when it says, “*Covers a multitude of sins?*” It means this; true love overlooks the infirmities of others. It disregards weaknesses and failures. It forgives. That is how it covers a multitude of sins. “*Love concealeth a matter.*” This is that love that He is talking about here. “*The end is near, the end of all things is at hand, therefore, be sober and serious. Call on God and above all things, have fervent, genuine, sincere love among yourselves.*”

Look at the third statement now in verse 9: “*And use hospitality one to another without grudging.*” What is He saying? He is saying this: “Practice hospitality and generosity.” Reach out to people. Reach a helping hand to people. Our Lord said, in Luke 6, “*Give to everyone that asketh of thee. As you would that men should do unto you, do ye also unto them. Be ye merciful as your Father is also merciful.*”

Not only is love an evidence of regeneration and a mark of grace, but generosity is also. I don’t only mean towards your family, but to friends and neighbors. Be generous. You see; we are stewards of God. What we have God gave us. What I have, God gave me. “*A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from above.*” So, I am a steward of God’s property. I really don’t own anything and you don’t either.

God said, “*The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof.*” He said, “*The cattle on a thousand hills are mine. Gold and silver that haven’t been mined belongs to Me.*” Everything belongs to Him. What we have He has loaned us. He has entrusted us with the care and stewardship of these things. We are to be generous and hospitable and giving. This is not of necessity or out of a duty. This shouldn’t be a duty or responsibility. It shouldn’t be done grudgingly but of a willing spirit and a thankful heart. “*Given to hospitality.*”

You see, selfishness is not grace and greed is not grace. Selfishness and greed are going to come home to people at the judgment. There were people who hoarded gold and hoarded silver and material possessions. They kept them all for themselves. He said this; “*The rust of your gold will rise up in judgment against you.*”

What does that mean? It means that out of greed and selfishness we keep everything for ourselves and to ourselves. We don’t share with others who are in need. When we stand before God at the judgment that hoarded material is going to be one of the witnesses against us. That is exactly what He is saying! “*As you have freely received, freely give.*”

I will tell you this; people who know something about the grace of God know something about the meaning of this Scripture. In every day plain language, “*It is more blessed (or more fun) to give than to receive.*” It is a greater pleasure for a regenerated heart to give

than to receive. He says, *“The end is almost here,”* it is around the corner. Call on God. Love one another and be generous. *“Cast your bread on the water.”*

He says in verse 10: *“Be good stewards of the grace of God.”* Usually, when the word stewardship is mentioned, we usually think of material things and material goods when we think of stewardship. I know a lot of churches have what they call “stewardship Sunday.” They usually preach on tithing. This says, *“Be good stewards of the grace of God.”* So, what I am saying is this; the grace of God includes everything that I am or have or ever shall be which is by the grace of God.

If any man speaks, teaches, preaches or witnesses, let him be a good steward and speak according to the truth of God’s Word. That is the reason that in preaching to you, *“I keep back nothing profitable unto you. I haven’t shunned to declare unto you all the council of God.”*

I haven’t tried to please men or tried to court this listening audience. I haven’t tried to have you send money or begged and sold gimmicks. I am a steward of the grace of God. I am a steward of the Word of God. I am steward of the mercy and grace of God in Jesus Christ and I intend to be a good one, because the end is mighty near. I intend to be a good one!

Oh, I tell you; a person who preaches ought to preach the truth of God’s Word no matter what it costs. Why? The reason is because it is God’s Word. I preach God’s sovereignty, God’s elective grace, Christ’s effectual, sufficient, particular redemption and atonement. I preach the priesthood of believers. I also preach the security of the believers, the elect of God, His sheep. There is no problem in declaring these things.

I know people don’t care for it. It is still God’s Word and I am a steward of God’s Word. I am going to continue to preach these things. A man who preaches ought to preach the truth of God’s Word because it is God’s Word. A man on the brink of death and judgment is a fool not to preach God’s Word.

I would be a fool to compromise the Word of God. I would be a fool to compromise the truth of God, especially, when I am standing on the threshold of death. *“The end is near; be a good steward of God’s Word. If any man minister, let him do it according to the ability that God has given him.”* If a man renders a service in the kingdom of God, whether he reads, prays, sings, waits tables, gives, visits the sick, relieves the poor, or builds the church, *“Let him do it with all his heart, as unto the Lord. The end is at hand.”*

It is time to get serious, *“That God may be glorified.”* That is what is said, *“That God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ the Lord to whom be glory, now and forever.”* The end is near, call on God; love one another. Be generous and be a good steward of the grace of God. Serve God and others with all your heart for the glory of God.

Look at verse 12: *“And think it not strange or don’t be alarmed by the fiery, difficult trials that cometh upon you.”* Don’t be alarmed and don’t be amazed because, *“In this world (in this life, in this dying world), you are going to have tribulation.”* You are going to have trials. You are going to have times of suffering. There will be sickness, sorrow, bereavement, and broken-heartedness. You are going to have trials and that is all there is to it.

Some say that it is not being fair to tell believers that life is a bed of roses. It is not and it is difficult. I will tell you what I know about trials. I know first of all, trials and troubles are the common lot of all God’s people on this earth. God had only one Son without sin. He has no sons without sorrow and suffering.

I will tell you this about trials, they are not by chance. They are according to the will of God. They are ordered of the Lord. Trials are good for us. Yes sir, they are good for us. David said, *“It is good for me that I have been afflicted that I might learn Thy ways.”*

Trials prove our faith. That is what James says, *“They prove our faith.”* Trials teach us patience. You never learn patience without trials. You’ll never be able to weep with those that weep, unless you have wept. You can’t enter into troubles unless you have had troubles. You can’t be a good servant of God without troubles.

Trials also wean us from the world. We get weary of this world after so many trials. You see, heaven is not here, it is there. All these trials and afflictions on this earth are to wean us from this world. Paul wrote this, *“All the light afflictions are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be ours.”*

Finally, the end is near; call upon God fervently and earnestly seek the Lord. Love one another. Be generous and be a good steward of the grace of God. What you have glorify God. It doesn’t matter what folks think or what they say, just glorify God. Be a good steward.

Don't be upset when you have to go through a trial. God has ordered it for your good, for your eternal good. He says, last of all; "*Rejoice in the Lord.*" Rejoice that the hand of God is upon you; He could have passed you by.