

UNDER PRESSURE

Sermon-Based Study Guide
Good Shepherd, Los Alamitos

1 Peter 4.1-11 | August 12, 2018

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I. Introduction to this Study

This week we continue our series Under Pressure, learning from God's Word about how Christians should respond to challenges to our faith. In this week's study we see how bodily suffering can have a sanctifying effect, making us more like Jesus. Who doesn't want in on that!?

II. Connecting with One Another

Share about a season when you experienced suffering of one kind or another. In what ways did it change you?

III. Study the Text

a. Read 1st Peter 4.1-2.

Remember, when we see the word "Therefore," we need to ask what it's "there for." Why do you think Peter uses this word here, at the outset of chapter 4? What thought is he concluding from chapter 3?

b. The NIV's translation "arm yourselves also with the same attitude" rightly picks up on a military metaphor Peter uses. Remember what Jesus told Peter (after he chopped off another man's ear!), "Put your sword back in its place. For all who draw the sword will die by the sword."

Why then do you think Peter uses this military metaphor, calling Christians to "arm themselves"? What battle is Peter thinking of?

c. AYSO coaches tell their young players "attitude is everything." How does that compare with Peter's instruction in verse 1?

d. Peter writes, "whoever suffers in the body is done with sin." What do you think he means by that?

e. Read 1st Peter 4.3-4.

Verse 3 contains "a touch of ironical understatement," and yet, these acts of immorality were common in first century Asia Minor. Sexual misconduct, overindulgence, and idolatry were all part of worship in pagan temples.

What sort of immoral behavior is commonplace in our culture? Which of them could be tempting for Christians to engage in?

f. Peter writes that they "have spent enough time in the past" doing such things.

Did you have a similar season of life, like the prodigal son? Or have you “always been good”? If the latter, how does your faith inform your strong moral conviction throughout life?

- g. Verse 4 has been explained this way: “The lives of the Christians have been so turned around by their conversion to Jesus Christ that pagan neighbors are thoroughly bewildered. They cannot understand how it is that their former companions no longer want to join them in the old reckless rush into a flood of dissipation, a way of life abandoned to debauchery.”

Have you ever had this reaction from someone? How did you respond?

- h. Read 1st Peter 4.5-6.

Throughout this letter we are assured that divine judgment will be impartial (1.17), fair (2.23), inevitable (4.5), and full (4.6). Christians, however, have had their sins paid for by Christ (2.24), and will only be judged on their achievement for God in their lives (2nd Corinthians 5.10).

How does knowing that prompt you to use your gifts in ministry?

- i. What do you think Peter is referring to in the first part of verse 6?
- j. Read 1st Peter 4.7-11.

In these verses, Peter turns from individual instruction to church-wide, communal life together. Why should we be alert and of sober mind?

- k. What do you think it means that “love covers over a multitude of sins”?
- l. Other New Testament passages include long lists of spiritual gifts, but they all fall into one of the two categories listed here: speaking or serving.

Why should those you speak do so as if they were “the very words of God”? Why should those who serve “do so with the strength God provides”? Think of as many responses as you can!

IV. Pray

- a. Spend some time talking with God about any unconfessed sins, asking for forgiveness then thanking Him for His grace,
- b. Pray for strength to both abstain from sinful desires and endure challenges to your faith, that you might point others to Jesus,
- c. Lift up the young people you know who are going back to school this fall, that God would protect them from harm and use them for His Kingdom on their campuses.

