

## 22S01 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:7-11 Use God's Gifts Wisely

Hello everyone. Thank you for joining me today @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. I hope everyone is doing well. Today we are continuing our series on 1<sup>st</sup> Peter with 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:7-11.

The author of this letter is the Apostle Peter. Most scholars believe this letter was written sometime in AD60-64. The main theme of 1<sup>st</sup> Peter is "Where does our Hope come from?" for those suffering persecution. This letter was written to Christians living in the Roman Empire and facing persecution because they follow Jesus.

I'm reading from the International Children's Bible (ICB) again today, I like the plain English in this translation. But of course, you can use whatever translation you choose.

Before we start today, Peter is going to be reminding us today that we need to use God's gifts wisely. All of us have gifts from God, skills & abilities, resources, time and energy. These are gifts from our Father God, use them wisely. Use them for others, not just yourself.

Let's read 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:7-11 (ICB) *<sup>7</sup>The time is near when all things will end. So keep your minds clear, and control yourselves. Then you will be able to pray. <sup>8</sup>Most importantly, love each other deeply. Love has a way of not looking at others' sins. <sup>9</sup>Open your homes to each other, without complaining. <sup>10</sup>Each of you received a spiritual gift. God has shown you his grace in giving you different gifts. And you are like servants who are responsible for using God's gifts. So be good servants and use your gifts to serve each other. <sup>11</sup>Anyone who speaks should speak words from God. The person who serves should serve with the strength that God gives. You should do these things so that in everything God will be praised through Jesus Christ. Power and glory belong to him forever and ever. Amen.*

**Let's pray. Dear heavenly father, guide our discussion today such that your message is clear to each of us. As we read your word from 1<sup>st</sup> Peter, help us to feel the encouragement you intended us to feel. I pray that you help me stay out of the way so your hope and peace can be shared with us. I pray this in your name Lord Jesus. Amen.**

Okay, let's look closer at what Peter is telling us. First 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:7 (ICB) *<sup>7</sup>The time is near when all things will end. So keep your minds clear, and control yourselves. Then you will be able to pray.*

Peter wants us to be mindful that our time is short here in this broken world. We need to keep our focus on eternal things not our present difficulties. We need to resist the deceitful things of this world so we can pray and receive blessings from God. So we need to clear our minds of all the junk around us and control our earthly urges to be selfish, so we can benefit from our relationship with Jesus and share these benefits with all who are around us.

Let's read on, 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:8-9 (ICB) *<sup>8</sup>Most importantly, love each other deeply. Love has a way of not looking at others' sins. <sup>9</sup>Open your homes to each other, without complaining.* Peter reminds us Jesus told us to love each other as He loves. We need to love each other deeply, sincerely, sacrificially. We love each other because God loves them. We are not supposed to temper our love based on how good we think people are. We aren't to look at their sins. We are to love them. Love is an action word, not an emotion. Love is not all hugs and kisses. Love is doing what we can to help others, treating them with kindness and compassion. Love is blind to what the world sees and sees people the way God sees them. Peter uses the concept of opening our homes to each other. This concept of hospitality was something his readers understood as an act of kindness and love. Peter adds "without complaining" here and I think this is important. We need to love without grumbling. We are not really loving if we only go through the actions without feeling kindness. It's not just about how we act but how we think. Jesus wants us to truly love others as He does.

Let's read the next verse again, 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:10 (ICB) *<sup>10</sup>Each of you received a spiritual gift. God has shown you his grace in giving you different gifts. And you are like servants who are responsible for using God's gifts. So be good servants and use your gifts to serve each other.*

I really appreciate what Peter is saying here. Too often people think everyone is blessed identically and this is just not true. We are blessed equally but not identically. We are all different. God made us different for a reason, so of course the spiritual gifts He blesses us with are different. Equally important but in some cases very different. We often value some gifts more than others but that is not how God sees things. We need to focus on the gifts God has given us and how He wants us to use them for His glory. God gave us gifts to serve others so the body of Christ can be stronger as we work together to serve each other and reach others for Christ.

Let's read verse 11 again, 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:11 (ICB) *<sup>11</sup>Anyone who speaks should speak words from God. The person who serves should serve with the strength that God gives. You should do these things so that in everything God will be praised through Jesus Christ. Power and glory belong to him forever and ever. Amen.*

Peter ends this section of his letter with Amen. We commonly use this to end our prayers but do you know what it really means. Amen means "so be it" or "to be trusted" So when Peter uses this here he is stressing that what he has just said can be trusted. This is God's truth. When we talk, we need to talk with words from God. When we serve others, we serve them with the strength and gifts we have received from God. It's not about us, it's not even about the people we are loving and serving. It's about God. We love others because God loves us. We love others and serve others to show God's love to the world so God will be praised. As Peter puts it, all power and glory belong to Him (Jesus) forever and ever Amen.

Let's Review,

- 1) **Why does Peter remind us the end is near?** It is important for us to keep our focus on the big picture of God. Our eternal life actually started the day we started following Jesus. We are citizens of the Kingdom of God right now, today. So we have strength the world doesn't. We can face whatever and whoever with the strength Jesus has given us.
- 2) **Why do we have different Spiritual Gifts?** We are all different and because we are all different the Spiritual Gifts God gives us are different. We are all equally blessed as followers of Jesus but we have different roles and gifts. We need to use the Gifts we've given as God wants us to use them.
- 3) **How should we serve others?** With all we have been given. Our gifts, Our skills, our resources. All we have is from God and we should be focused on how God wants us to use what we have been given. We need to do this without complaining about it. We have to do it with a cheerful heart. As followers of Jesus we should want to serve others because this is what Jesus has asked us to do. Serving others is how we get to live the fulfilling life God has promised us.

Let me leave you with this today. Peter wants us to recognize we each have special and unique gifts from God. How we use our gifts matters to God. Be thankful for your gifts from God.

**Let's Pray.**

**Heavenly Father thank you. Thank you for our Spiritual Gifts. Help us to use them the way you want us to use them. Help us to stay focused on you Jesus so we can serve others the way you wish us to love them. I trust you Lord. I pray this in your Name Lord Jesus. Amen**

I hope you are enjoying our study of 1<sup>st</sup> Peter. I hope you will join me for the rest of this series

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