



“Armed With An Attitude” (I Peter 3:8-4:6)

Danny Hodges – NT3568

Intro: Eccl.3:11; Eternity for each individual will be determined by one thing, and that is what we do with Jesus Christ. John 1:12-13; once I become a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ, this world is no longer my home. And God’s will for every child of God is to not be conformed any longer to the pattern of this world. We find four very practical ways this is lived out in our text today. Just before we begin, look back for a moment at I Peter 2:19-21. This is pretty much the theme of much of this little epistle.

I. REPAY EVIL WITH GOOD (vv.8-12)

- It is our calling.
- It ensures blessing: Love of life, good days, eyes of the Lord on our lives, ears of the Lord open to our prayers.
- Romans 12:17-21 Do not repay anyone evil for evil... Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “I will repay,” says the Lord (Deut.32:35). On the contrary: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.” (Prov.25:21-22) Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.
- Luke 6:27-36
- Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

II. DO NOT GIVE IN TO FEAR (vv.13-18).

- The phrase quoted here is Isaiah 8:12; Read Isa.8:11-12; What is this fear?
- Fear of ridicule/rejection; See Luke 6:22; John 7:12-13; 9:18-23; 12:42; This starts early in life, doesn’t it? I remember before I was even a teenager and my older than me neighbor Jerry Broach called me “monkey ears” (show picture on screen). I used to lay on each ear in bed at night in an attempt to flatten my ears out. There have been so many things I’ve done over the years just so I would not be rejected by “the crowd.”

- Fear of threats by the enemy
 - Note bottom of page on Isaiah 8 – “Do not call for a treaty every time these people call for a treaty.” Sometimes the treaty involved a compromise with the enemy that ruined their testimony for God, gave the enemy territory they should have never attained, and prevented the Lord from doing a miraculous work that would have ultimately meant victory; See II Chron.16:1-3, 7-10; Isaiah 31:1 Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horses, who trust in the multitude of their chariots and in the great strength of their horsemen, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel, or seek help from the LORD.
- Fear of physical suffering
 - As a Christian in America, physical suffering is not as much of a threat as in some other countries, but it does occasionally happen.
- Fear of death; Jesus warned his disciples that a day was coming when those who put them to death would think they were doing a service to God (John 16:2).
 - Matthew 10:28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Looking beyond this present world enables us to face ridicule, rejection, physical suffering, and even death with an attitude that baffles those who do not have the eternal hope that we do. See Acts 6:8-15; 7:51-8:1; When they saw Stephen’s face as that of an angel, they saw hope on his face despite the rejection and suffering he was enduring. This hope enabled Stephen to overcome fear and face persecution, and even death. I believe it was this hope Stephen had that God used to convict and ultimately save Saul (of Tarsus). Saul, as religious as he was, did not have what Stephen had. As much as Saul knew about the Scriptures, and about God, he had no personal relationship with him.

III. EXPECT TO LIVE IN THIS PRESENT WORLD AS A MINORITY (vv.19-22).

- Related verses on v.19: Eph.4:9; We are not told what Jesus preached to these spirits. Who are they? My opinion is that they are all those people Noah preached to for 120 years before the flood came and they perished. Last Wednesday evening we studied Zechariah 12 and 13. Read Zechariah 12:1, noting that God says he forms man’s spirit within him. See Hebrews 12:9. We are a spirit, we live in a body, and we have a soul.
- The emphasis here is on the disobedience of the “spirits” in Noah’s day. Their disobedience is in contrast to the “few” who obeyed and were saved from the judgment of God.
- The Flood pictures death, burial, and resurrection. The waters buried the earth in judgment, but they also lifted Noah and his family up to safety. Our baptism is the same picture of being buried, but “in Christ” (the ark). And as we were buried in Christ, so we are resurrected in Christ. And our resurrected life in Christ is one in which we pledge a

“good conscience” toward God (Having been cleansed, forgiven, saved through Christ’s sacrifice).

- Note: Noah and his family (the few who were saved) would have been the talk of the town in their day. Nobody took them seriously, people would have thought they were weird. But the truth was they were the only wise ones in all the world of that day. Jesus said it would be the same in the day of His second coming. See Matt.24:37-39.
- Matthew 7: 13 "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. 14 But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

IV. PERSEVERE IN PUTTING ATTITUDE INTO ACTION (4:1-6)

- I read one commentator’s interpretation of verse one who suggested that the meaning was that if you suffer to the point of death, your battle with sin is over. While that is certainly true, I don’t think that is the main meaning here. I think it has more to do with actually suffering in my body for Christ. Once a Christian crosses over from attitude to action, they begin in to become spiritually strong. It happens when I actually confess Christ openly, publicly (at work, school, etc.). It happens when I suffer the abuse from friends, family, classmates, people I work with, etc.
- I made several commitments to Jesus Christ over the years. The only problem was I did not follow through on keeping the commitment after making it. Fear, as well as simply the lure of sinful desires kept me from following through. Some of my classmates in middle school and high school made public commitments to Christ, but like me, did not persevere (Johnny Patterson, Fred Wilham). Thank God at the age of nineteen I got serious about a commitment to Christ, and I was determined that no abuse from the crowd was going to deter me. And that abuse came. My best friend Tommy McDaniel could not wrap his mind around the change in me, and he wondered out loud what I now did for fun, other than playing sports. He was referring to what Peter here calls “plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation.”
- Now, let me say that, over the years since becoming a Christian, I have not always been willing to suffer for Christ. I have failed, sometimes miserably. Can anybody relate? You see, even a genuinely born again believer can fail. Just ask Peter. Peter certainly intended to persevere in an unwavering commitment for Christ, but he surprised himself with bitter failure (see Mark 14:27-31, 66-72; Luke 22:60b-62 (tears of shame, sorrow, repentance); Failure here prompted Peter to repent, but that repentance did not prevent future failure. Peter matures, yet years later as a seasoned saint, fails again (see Gal.2:11-13). The first fear Peter had to overcome is the fear of abuse he received from unbelievers, but the second is from fellow believers who were not standing for truth. Acts 10 records the story of taking the gospel to uncircumcised Gentiles, and what it cost Peter afterward (see Acts 11:1-3). In Antioch, Peter was not willing to suffer that same abuse.
- Let’s look at one more story that I pray will encourage us to courageously persevere in our faith. See I Sam.13:6-7; 14:8-14, 15, 20-23. The battle is sometimes not “moving on” against the enemy because so many professing Christians have not armed themselves

with an attitude (to suffer for Christ's sake). Many believers are hiding because they have given in to fear (of ridicule, abuse, etc.). If some of us would have the courage to stand up for Jesus Christ in our world, perhaps other believers who are in hiding would come out and stand with us.

- Philippians 1:12-14

CONCLUSION

- I Corinthians 15:31 I die every day - I mean that brothers – just as surely as I glory over you in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- Romans 8:18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.