Things Worth Preserving

1 Peter 4: 7- 11

Our passage says “The end of all things is near.” (1 Peter 4:7a). The teaching that the end times are near, is found all the way through the N.T. Believers in every age have lived with the expectant hope of the soon return of Christ. In the immediate context Peter had just been describing the ungodly behavior of the unbeliever and the kind of suffering the believer will experience as a result of that. Persecution of Christians will be a part of the end time scenario. There seems to be little doubt in the mind of most Bible scholars that we are living in the last days prior to the Lord's return.

The word "therefore," in 1 Peter 4:7 means that when we realize the nearness of Christ's return and our entrance into eternity, there are a number of things we must do! There are certain things that demand our immediate attention. We are exhorted to move out of the comfort zone of mediocrity, into the active mode of spiritual recovery. It is high time to wake ourselves up; to cast off any godless attitude that restrains us; forsake the sins that hinder us; and live in such a way as to make Jesus proud of us should He return during our life-time.

We are instructed to establish certain priorities. To adopt and commit ourselves to a specific lifestyle that will meet the pressures of living in these last days. In these verses there are at least Six-Basic Priorities mentioned, that must be preserved in our lives. By “preserve,” I mean “hold on to them at all cost” as they are God’s stabilizers in an unstable world.

1. PRESERVE YOUR SANITY - *“Be clear minded”* (1 Peter 4:7). The first thing we are instructed to preserve in this passage, is our sanity of mind. That is: To live with a clear and uncluttered mind. To have a steady balanced

mind. The Greek verb is *"sophronein,"* and it means, "to keep your mind safe." Or as I put it, "to preserve your sanity!" The Greeks spoke of "a type of wisdom which characterizes the man who is pre-eminently sane." That is, insight and ability, to keep things in their right perspective. The great characteristic of sanity is that it sees things in their proper proportions: it sees what things are important and what things are not important. It keeps things in their right perspective. Can you think of another time in history comparable to ours, when minds have been bombarded daily with all kinds of wicked, sinful lifestyles and ungodly philosophies?

Modern media and particularly television is filling the mind with anti-Christian principles. God, the Bible, Church and Clergy are constantly under fire, laughed at, mocked, and ridiculed for holding onto archaic & ancient principles. Do you realize that the average American watches about THREE hours of television each day? No wonder people are confused and don't know what to believe! And now the Internet has taken over. Anyone can Google anything, then after reading about it, can think they are an authority on the subject.

When we have no peace of mind, our lives are tense, our days are unfulfilling, and our contacts with others tend to be strained. One person said, "The things that are happening in the world today, could make a sane person .... insane." No wonder God's Word tells us to *"renew our minds"* (Romans 12:2), and *"to develop a new attitude in our minds"* (Ephesians 4:23). Real and lasting peace only comes through a mind set on trusting the Lord. Isaiah 26:3 says, *"God will keep our minds in perfect peace, when we trust completely in Him."* We need to begin and end each day with God to have real purpose and not despair of life.

2. PRESERVE YOUR SELF-CONTROL - *"Be self-controlled*" (1 Peter 4:7). The Holy Spirit

uses a word which means *"to act soberly, sensibly, and seriously. To be careful and wise in all you do,"* There are so many people around us in the world today who are way out of control and who are behaving like senseless fools. They throw caution to the wind! Do you ever wonder why 1 Peter 4:3-5, warns us that the world will think we are weird or strange if we do not join them in the sinful things they do? He says, *"They will laugh at us with contempt and derision."*

Peter says in this passage that too many Christians have already spent enough of their time in the past doing what the godless do - committing sex sins, getting drunk, using drugs, having wild parties and drink binges, mocking God, and ridiculing Christians for their beliefs. Then he adds a warning! *"But keep this in mind, that on a future day, they must face God, the judge of all, and be punished for the way they have lived."* As Christians we are to let the Holy Spirit give us self–control in all areas of our life, with God’s peace (Galatians 5:23).

3. PRESERVE YOUR PRAYER LIFE - *"So that you can pray"* (1 Peter 4:7). We are told in this passage that when we evaluate things in the light of eternity, when our priorities are right, and when we are acting sensibly and responsibly, keeping our emotions in check - then and only then will we be able to pray as we should pray. There is no question that these days our minds are taken up with so many things that we have little time to pray. And even when we do take time to pray, our thoughts are interrupted by a host of other mental images and it is hard to think, and concentrate in prayer. That is why we must work on “Preserving our Prayer Life.” James 4:2-3 says, *"The reason you don't have what you want, is that you don't ask God for it. And even when you do ask, you don't get it because your whole aim is wrong - you only*

want what will give you pleasure." As we mature spiritually we begin to pray for the right things and stay within His will, resulting in a satisfying prayer life. We learn to pray correctly when we take life wisely and seriously. It is then that we begin to say in all things: *"Your will be done, O Lord."*

4. PRESERVE YOUR LOVE - *"Love deeply"* (1 Peter 4:8). We are told to love each other deeply or intensely. That is to say "Preserve Your God Given Christian Love." He's speaking here about spiritual love and concern for each other. He tells us to work at it, to make love our aim, rather than angry hurtful conflicts. Sometimes it's easier to talk about loving the world, when the real problem is loving our neighbor, our co-workers, our spouses, and our children. Don't let the pace of life, "turn you off," from caring. We are to strive to demonstrate that love which sets us apart as Christians. Let us remember the words of Christ in John 13:34 *"A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love each other. By this shall everyone know that you belong to me, IF you love one another."* Hold on to His love!

5. PRESERVE YOUR GRACES - *"Offer hospitality to one another, without grumbling"* (1 Peter 4:9). In this verse the Holy Spirit teaches that we are to practice hospitality with a joyous spirit. We are to major on taking care of one another. This verse is stressing the need to be helpful to each other - to find ways we can be kind and gracious to our fellow Christians. It is not instructing us to take on the social welfare of those around us. But it is teaching us to be considerate of those in our fellowship who are in need. Beware of becoming callous and ungracious. When you preserve hospitality and practice giving, you will be surprised how it cheers your life.

6. PRESERVE YOUR GIFTS - *"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the Glory and the Power forever and ever. Amen!"* (1 Peter 4:10-11). This passage reminds us once again that if we do not preserve God's gift to us and use it in His service, spiritual atrophy will set it in. And instead of God receiving praise and people getting blessed, our sinfulness and selfishness will be seen by all.

There are Christians everywhere, in the Church and outside the Church, who have received special gifts from God, but they are sitting idle, like a car with flat tires, flat battery and no gasoline. They are spiritually inactive, moaning, grumbling, and complaining, rather than saying, "good job" can I help? Let's become involved for the Lord and be used to our greatest potential. Ask yourself this question, "What am I doing with the gift God has given me?" This verse says, "Let us faithfully administer God's grace given to us." That is, let us get on with doing it, so that the Lord's work will grow and God will be Praised!

As Christians then, living in these last days, when the end of all things is near, these verses are very relevant to us. I believe they address at least six things worth preserving that as we stand firm in these end times, we will be a real blessing to everyone we meet. May God help us to do this for His glory!

Things Worth Preserving

1 Peter 4:7-11



Bible CORRESPONDENCE FELLOWSHIP

PMA PO Box 2300, Port Orchard, WA 98366
www.prisonmission.org

"PMA provides Bible Correspondence courses in English and Spanish at no cost to inmates"