

March 19, 2020

Good morning Church!

I'm sitting here at church working on the next "One Another" message for our series together. The text is 1 Peter 4:7-11, a passage that begins with "*But the end of all things is at hand (near)*" Does *this* seem providential! In the original Greek language, the words "*all things*" come first in the sentence, so that it literally reads, "*All things, the end of is near,*" emphasizing the comprehensive sweep of the words.

**We are living in the end times.** But then, the Church has *always* lived in the end times. Jesus' resurrection initiated them, as Hebrews 1:1-2 says:

*"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has **in these last days** spoken to us by His Son..."*

And Peter says in 1 Peter 1:20 that Christ "*was manifest in these last times for you.*" If it was the last times when Jesus was here, and when Peter wrote to the church, then it's been the end times for more than 2,000 years! Which actually makes perfect sense when you realize that the word for "*end*" is the Greek word **telos**, which signifies the limit at which a person or thing ceases to be what it was to that point; or at which previous activities have ceased. Here it speaks of the consummation of the kingdom of God on earth, a consummation that involves the return of Christ for His saints!

*But the word can also speak of the final stage of a process well on its way to completion.* The last thing on God's calendar was the resurrection of Jesus; the *next* thing is the *return* of Jesus. **And we are living in the "in between" of these 2 great events**, in the final stage before the next climactic prophetic event of God's eternal plan. Therefore, Peter's statement that "the end of all things is near" is not exactly the same as saying the end of the world will happen *soon*. It's more than a termination point in time. It's also a *period* of time that will *culminate* a yet future event.

The outcome of history has already been assured by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to **a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.**"* (1 Peter 1:3-4)

Our Lord has secured this future for us and has now "*gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.*" (1 Peter 3:22)

**What sort of people should we be in the end times?**

Peter says in the rest of 4:7, "***therefore, be serious and watchful in your prayers.***"

The first response in tough times is to **adjust our thinking to the mind of God.** "*Be serious*" and "*be watchful*" are similar in meaning: they command us to think rightly and be clear-minded; to prepare our *minds* for whatever is about to come. This continues what Peter has been saying, "*Fully set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed by **making your mind ready for action by being self-controlled***" (1 Peter 1:13).

And here in 4:7 he says that right thinking and clear-mindedness should result in *prayer!*

So my message for now is this:

Along with your daily infusion of information from the government and the medical community, **take time to read God's Word, and let it lead you to prayer.**

Here are some Scriptures to help you:

When **afraid...**

Psalms 27 and 91; mark 4:35-41; Hebrews 13:5-6; 1 John 4:13-18

When **afraid of death...**

Psalms 23 and 63; John 6:35-40; Romans 8:18-39; 1 Corinthians 15:35-57; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10

When **anxious...**

Psalms 25; Matthew 6:24-34; Matthew 10:26-31; Philippians 4:6-7; 1 Peter 5:6-7

When **doubting your faith in God...**

Psalms 8 & 146; Proverbs 30:5; Matthew 7:7-11; Luke 17:5-6; John 6:24-31; Hebrews 11; 1 John 5:13-15

When **insecure or lacking confidence...**

Psalms 73 and 108; Philippians 4:10-13; 1 John 3:19-24;

When **lonely...**

Psalms 22 and 42; John 14:15-31

When **overwhelmed and stressed out...**

Psalms 121; Matthew 11:28-30

When **worried...**

Matthew 6:25-34; Philippians 4:4-6

**God's got this, brothers and sisters.** And by His grace, we have "one another" as well!

- Pastor Doug