

Are You Done with Sin?

1 Peter 4:1-6

OK, I admit it. It is a trick question. Are you done with sin? I mean, really done with it? Have you ceased from sin?

Look at what Peter writes at the end of verse 1. So what about you? Do those words apply to any of you? Have you ceased from sin? Peter seems to imply that his words do refer to us, to normal, ordinary Christians. But who would dare claim such a thing? Can any of you claim to be entirely and completely rid of sin? Can any of you claim that you don't sin any more, that sin doesn't bother you or tempt you any more? Well, no.

Of course not. But are you done with sin? Maybe you want to be done with it! I hope you do. Maybe in some defined way, you are done with sin. You used to be a drunkard, and you no longer get drunk. You used to engage in sexual immorality, and you are now committed to purity. But done with sin altogether? None of us can claim such a thing.

So what does Peter mean? As I begin to answer that question this morning, look at the context. Namely, suffering. Jesus' suffering.

Peter has just declared the reality of the gospel truth at the end of chapter 3.

v.18 "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit."

He suffered for our sins. He died for our sins. He paid the penalty and endured the punishment for our sins. And, according to verse 22, he "has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of

God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him."

Therefore, as chapter 4 begins, therefore, on the basis of that declaration of the saving work of Jesus Christ, therefore, as the application of that for your lives,

v.1 "Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin."

So we are to have the same mind as Jesus, and the context for that is our experience of suffering. But what does that mean for us? That is our subject today, but before I answer that question directly, you need to understand an important contrast. Peter is making that contrast as he addresses Christians, and that is the focus of this book. He's writing to Christians, those whom he identifies as the elect, those who are believers, those for whom Jesus has died. The word "therefore" identifies an application to the daily life of those believers, what the Bible would call the new man. And, therefore, the contrast is with,

I. THE LIFE OF THE OLD MAN.

That life is pretty obvious. The contrast for a Christian is explicit.

v.2-4

So what is that life of the old man like? How can we define it? Perhaps the best way is by identifying the goal. The purpose. That is generally a very edifying question to ask and to ponder, "What is the goal of your life?" What are you trying to accomplish? What would you like to achieve? What would you wish to become?

The goal of the old man, the non-Christian, is simple and straightforward. Pleasure. Satisfying my desires. Meeting my needs. Indulgence. In more philosophical terms, “Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow you may die.” For such people, who have no other purpose in life,

A. The goal of life is nothing but the fulfillment of sinful desires.

As Peter puts it in verse 2, they live out their “time in the flesh for the lusts of men.” Lust there has particular reference to forbidden desires. The craving and longing for what is prohibited, which is, of course, the very root of the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Given the freedom to enjoy with God’s blessings all the trees of the that Garden, they chafed under the one prohibition.

Gen. 2:15 “Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 “but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

One prohibition. One forbidden tree to test their obedience. And their goal in life immediately became eating the fruit of that tree. Peter calls it simply “the lusts of men.” The lusts inherent in our humanity, our fallen humanity. What the Apostle John calls “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.” Simply put, it refers to all your sinful desires. It refers to all the desires related to the fulfillment of all your passions and cravings. The fulfillment of your desires. You feel a want, you feel an urge, you want to satisfy yourself. And so you indulge. That’s life. That’s the goal of life.

Do you want a more descriptive explanation? Look at, v.3 “For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles--when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.”

Not much has changed over the years, has it? Look at the news. Look at the world around you. Look at popular entertainment, and famous entertainers. Look at television and movies. Look on the internet. Look while you walk down the street. You can’t even miss the message. Pursue your own physical pleasure.

What do you see in this world? Lewdness. The old King James translates, “lasciviousness.” It refers to unbridled and unrestrained living, the spirit that knows no restraints and dares to exercise complete and total disregard for any self-control.

Then there is the word translated “lusts” as we saw in verse 2. And drunkenness. That’s certainly still around, isn’t it? The craving for more, the craving for so much that you lose control. That’s the goal of life, to get drunk on Friday night.

I was not terribly surprised to see that goal of life lived out when I first went to college, those the open example of a life of drunkenness was still quite a shock to my system. But what really surprised me, with some disillusionment, was the realization that life was no different for my peers when I graduated from college. Those professional engineers I worked with after graduation were no different. The goal of life was to get drunk on Friday night.

Then Peter mentions revelries or orgies. And drinking parties, carousing. Drunken parties. Not just getting drunk by yourself,

but doing it with others, generally at nighttime, and making yourself a general nuisance in the process.

Peter concludes all of that with a simple reference to idolatries. Worshipping idols, generally speaking the idols of pleasure. With an adjective inserted for emphasis, “abominable” or “detestable” idolatries. Unlawful, unrighteous, ungodly, with an overall emphasis upon sexual immorality and drunken carousing.

So, there is nothing new under the sun. Sin hasn’t changed all that much, for that is still the goal of life for the old man. The unbeliever. And since there is nothing else that will satisfy the cravings of his heart, such debauchery undoubtedly degenerates into a sense of nothingness. Nihilism. Ultimately, even suicidal despair. For if you have nothing to look forward to in life besides moral perversion and getting drunk, you really have nothing to look forward to.

Except this, the judgment of God. For the old man, for the non-Christian,

B. The outcome of life is nothing but that of condemnation.

v.5

Dear friends, please hear these words and recognize the truth within them. There will be a day of judgment.

2 Cor. 5:10 “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”

2 Peter 3:7 “But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. 8 But, beloved, do not

forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.”

Judgement will come. In Jesus’ own words,

John 5:28 “Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice 29 "and come forth--those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.”

Now, before I go on, let me dwell on this thought for a moment. There will be a judgment. A judgment unto death, eternal death, for those who die without Christ. A judgment of hell for those whose life goal consisted only in the fulfillment of their own sinful desires. And I do intend that to be a sober and severe warning.

Heb. 9:27 “And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.”

If you would wish to escape that judgment, then I call upon you even now to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, to trust in him, that the suffering he endured might satisfy the wrath and judgment of God which you deserve. And that by faith, you might be saved from that wrath to come.

Heb 10:31 “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

So repent of your sin. Confess your sins to God. Ask him to forgive you your sins, claiming as your mediator the Lord Jesus himself. For otherwise, you can expect no other outcome besides this terrible judgment.

And children, children, please heed these words as well. You cannot presume upon the faith of your parents. You cannot presume upon your position in your family to be saved from the guilt of your sin. You must confess your own sins and turn from them, to avoid this judgment of God. Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved. Otherwise, only the judgment of God.

Now, to the question of the day. If you have done that, if you do trust in Jesus Christ for your salvation, are you done with sin? Well, what Peter is teaching in this passage is that the answer to that question is 'Yes.' For the Christian, yes, you have ceased from sin. You are done with sin. That's what he says. Now, what does he mean?

It means that you are a new man. To make the contrast with the old man, how shall we then described,

II. THE LIFE OF THE NEW MAN.

I'll start where I have to start, which is to say with the realization of our union with Christ. Being joined to Jesus Christ, so what is his becomes ours. According to Peter,

v.1 "Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind..."

So here's the connection with Jesus' suffering. Here is Peter's purpose in this text and in this whole book. It is to remind us of our,

A. Union with Christ in his suffering.

Peter urges us to acknowledge that union, even exhorting you, "arm yourselves with the same mind." That's certainly a mixed metaphor, with reference to the military duty of taking up arms. Getting prepared for battle. And to do so by taking to yourself the great weapon Peter would call "the mind of Christ." Take up for yourself the same manner of thinking, the same perspective as Jesus had toward his suffering.

In other words, unite yourselves to Jesus in his suffering. As Paul would put it,

Gal. 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me."

Or in Romans 6, a parallel passage for Peter's words,

Rom. 6:1 "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? 3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?"

As a Christian, you were baptized into Jesus' death. You died with him. You have joined in the "fellowship of his sufferings." Union with Christ, in his suffering. Buried with him in his death. United together with him in the likeness of his death. Crucified with him.

If you are a Christian, that is your identity! You are joined to Christ, in his death. And, in his resurrection. That's really the point. You who have died with Christ have been made alive with him too! Let me continue in,

Rom. 6:4 "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead

by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.”

This is for your encouragement. This is for your strength and vitality in your battle against sin. As a Christian, you have died with Christ. And as a Christian, you have been raised again to life with Christ. And so there is the evidence of a new life. It is nothing less than the,

B. The transformation of your life.

So consider all that was said about the old man, then read again,
v.2

The key words are “he no longer should live...” There is a change. A dramatic change. And a noticeable change.
v.4

You see, the gospel brings about just such a change. Christianity is not an empty nor man-made philosophy, but rather the power of God to take a man dead in his sin and to make him a new creature. And Peter describes that new man, that transformed man, in the words of,
v.6

So there is the old man, the unbeliever. And when God saves you, you become the new man. You were dead in your trespasses and sins, and God makes you alive. That’s the reality of the situation. That’s what actually takes place. And that is the basis and the foundation for all the biblical exhortations to “put on the new man.”

Col. 3:9 “Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him.”

People of God, put off the old man and put on the new, for that is who you are in Christ. Don’t spend the days of your lives seeking to fulfill all your fleshly desires, but seek to do the will of God. That’s the transformation Peter identifies in verse 2.

And you have this great encouragement,

C. Freedom from sin.

In this context, now read,

v.1 “Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.”

What does it mean to cease from sin? What does it mean to be done with sin? In what way can we gloriously say of ourselves, in Christ, “I am done with sin!”? How is that true for every one of you who is a true believer in Jesus Christ?

It means the same thing as Paul’s words “to die to sin.” The words mean that when you are united to Christ, when you have died with Christ, you have died to the power of sin. You have died to the dominion and slavery of sin. You are, therefore, freed from that power.

Again,

Rom. 6:6 “...knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. 7 For he who has died has been freed from sin.”

He who has died with Christ has been freed from the enslaving power of sin. He is done with sin, as the controlling master of his. He is done with the slavery of sin, the dominion of sin. Praise the Lord.

So now what? Live it out. Live your life in that freedom from sin. Verse 6, “live according to God in the spirit.” Verse 2, live for “the will of God.”

Or, again, finally,

Rom. 6:11 “Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”

People of God, this is true. This is reality. If you think this is some sort of obtuse theological lecture, you have missed the whole point. The point is that in Christ, you are done with sin. It’s power is broken. Therefore, in the day to day living of your lives, “do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.” Knowing the glorious encouragement that “sin shall not have dominion over you.”

Are you done with sin? Sadly, in terms of the ongoing presence of sin, none of us can make such a claim. Battling sin is a daily struggle. The encouragement of this text is to engage in that struggle with great encouragement. And especially with reference to the struggles and sufferings of life.

So you who suffer, you who are thus united with Jesus in his

sufferings, don’t be discouraged by that experience. Don’t be overwhelmed or in despair by the experiences of his life, especially the suffering. Instead, quite to the contrary, gain your strength from that experience, because you are united to Jesus. You are joined in fellowship with Jesus. Therefore,

v.1 “...since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.”

As a Christian, because you are joined to Jesus in the common experience of human flesh, the old man is dead. You are done with sin.