

1 Peter 4a

Given at Beth Messiah
Sydney
4 October 2003
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" Attitude Check"

[For those online, there is the text of Scripture at the end]

INTRODUCTION

L'shana tova to you and yours. Today is Shabbat shuvah, the sabbath between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Traditionally it's a time to steady on with the theme of repentance. It's a time to make sure we are in harmony with our brothers and sisters. It's a time to beat our breast and continue to repent of our sins, to acknowledge God as rightful judge and as Sovereign.

What are the 10 Days? These 10 days bounded by Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur frame the religious commitment of most of the world's Jews. Although the surveys of Jewish people worldwide show an increase in secularization, if there is a time of connection with the religion of our forebears, it is during the 10 Days. This may be one of the reasons why we are conducting a Yom Kippur service on Monday daytime at the Paddo church in Paddington, at 11 a.m. if you have time to come by.

One of the ongoing themes of the Days of Awe is the concept that God has books in which he writes our names, after determining who will live and who will die, for the next year. These books are written in on Rosh Hashanah, but our actions during the Days of Awe can alter G-d's decree, they say. The actions that change the decree are "teshuvah, tefilah

and tzedakah," repentance, prayer, good deeds (usually, charity). These books of judgment are sealed on Yom Kippur. This concept of writing in books is the source of the common greeting during this time is "May you be inscribed in the Book of Life and sealed for a good year."

Of course as Messianic Jews we look at the books in a different way. The hoops-jumping of the rabbinical Jewish people will not ensure God's forgiveness. No amount of good works of our own righteousness are impressive to the Almighty. Only one thing gets his eternal attention, and that's the death and suffering of the Saviour who died that we all might live. So our reading teaches us today and the whole of the Newer Testament informs us as well.

So how dare we call ourselves Jews at all! If we won't comply with t'shuvah and tzedakah and tefilah? But of course we do! It's that we see those as supplementary to redemption and not as supplanting to the sacrificial system. [for those online, go have a read at my article on Yom Kippur for more of this

<http://members.aol.com/bobmendo/yomkippur.html>]

Now for today we will look at the first half of chapter four of 1 Peter. This section is principally concerned with attitudes. So we break the outline down to these four:

1. A militant attitude towards sin
2. A patient attitude towards those outside the faith
3. A longing expectant attitude towards Messiah
4. A fervent attitude towards other believers

Some salesmen employ devices to ensure that others are listening to them throughout their presentation. They are commonly called "short sales." These involve asking questions like "are you still with me?" or "Does this make sense to you?" Getting someone to agree with you is crucial along the way as you make the pitch.

In many Christian circles, preachers employ similar devices. Maybe you have heard a pastor sing out "Amen?" to his congregation at a time. The common one of the 90s is "God is good; all the time" You get it.

Tuvya Zaretsky is the leader of our Jews for Jesus work in Southern California. When he lived in Boston, he told me a story of a pastor nearby who had a similar but unusual short sale. Whenever the pastor would step on the toes of the people in his church, when he would make a point that he knew would be a bit controversial, he would sing out "Attitude check?" to which the people were accustomed to reply "Praise the Lord!" He knew that when he went after some points of what some parents call 'tough love' that he would have to make sure the people were onside with him. Let's remember that pastor today as we do some attitude checking of our own. Amen?

I. A militant attitude towards sin (verses 1-3)

Warren Wiersbe is one of my favourite Bible teachers. He has written dozens of books on the faith. In his lessons on 1 Peter, he writes about a man and he sharing in a restaurant. It was one of those fancy restaurants where as you walk in, you realize you should have brought a torch to find your way to the table. He and his friend entered, sat down, and began a conversation. After a few minutes, the waitress brought a menu. Wiersbe's friend said, "It didn't take us too

long to get used to the darkness". Wiersbe says, "There is a whole sermon in that sentence."

Maybe that's what Peter is trying to get at here.

As we read in verses 1ff "since Messiah has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. "

I don't usually think in terms of a military strike. After the Iraqi war and the commensurate global opinion bashing Messers Bush, Blair and Howard, I think shyness *viz.* military options might be wise now. But the Bible uses military language and says that is the kind of attitude that is required in fighting against sin.

Hearing those words of defeating sin and ceasing from sin sounds very good, like we have that option or possibility of entire sanctification in our living. That's not what the apostle is saying, I don't think. Peter doesn't say that suffering will guarantee perfectionism; otherwise it would be reached by AIDS or hurricane victims, just because of a natural affliction. Pharaoh suffered greatly but didn't get perfect at all! Peter is saying that suffering while you look at the Saviour is going to produce good and the capacity and the direction of change and life in the Messiah. This reflects Paul's words in Corinthians "temporary light affliction works in us an eternal weight of glory WHILE WE LOOK at the eternal things" . It's what we see while we go through the trials which determines what we will eventually become!

Peter then tells us to move ahead, another Rosh Hashanah motif, remembering what we used to be and choosing to be different. Most of the time we are not to look back (Remember Lot's wife) but there are times in our experience where looking back is helpful, only to see how far God has led us and what He continues to want to make us into.

II. A patient attitude towards those outside the faith (4-6)

Reading in our text we see Peter wants us to preach to the lost, and to care for them, to be kind to them, to be hopeful for their hearing and their reply. We should never give up on people. Just a year ago Julie was lost, and then she came around to be found at this time Yom Kippur last year. David here was lost and came to faith 3 years ago, also Yom Kippur. We have to see our families and our friends and our colleagues as potentials in the Kingdom of God. We have to believe for them, even as Priscillia did for her husband. Even as God never gives up on any of us, in desire to bring us to himself.

III. A longing and expectant attitude towards Messiah (7)

Not only should we long for others to find Y'shua, we should also long for his return. This was and continues to be the only real hope for the people of God. We can wish for our side to find the try line tomorrow in the Grand Final, but the real joy of the believer is in eternity. We can wish for a winning lottery ticket (although I by no means am encouraging such), but no amount of winnings will win our hearts like the Return of Y'shua to earth.

Peter tells us in this text 10 commandments. We will only have a few minutes to look at the first few today, and we will go more in detail in our next time together.

The ten, (to list only) are Be sober, watch to prayer, have fervent love, use hospitality, use your gifts (we will end with these today), don't be surprised, rejoice (verse 13), don't be ashamed (15-16), glorify God (16-18), and commit yourself to God (19).

IV. A fervent attitude towards other believers (8-11)

The opposite of being sober is being drunk or out of balance, and even more out of control. Manic is another opposite term. God wants us to control ourselves and live in His plans for others. Who better than Peter to tell us that we should watch and pray, since it was he and the other boys who fell asleep in the Garden of Gethsemane on Passover night with Y'shua. He knows when we are to watch and pray. And even though he failed in this, God forgave him and thus Peter wants us to know this forgiveness and love, and beyond that. He wants us to know the watch and pray of the Messiah.

He tells us to have a fervent attitude and love to others. This word "fervent" is one of struggle, similar to an athlete straining to get extra metres on the ground tomorrow in the Roosters/Panthers clash. A couple weeks ago I went with some friends to see the Swans in their last contest in AFL at Telstra Stadium. They played so well for 3 quarters, but gave up the finish then. In other words, they only kicked one kick the entire fourth quarter, letting the Lions have the game and then the Lions as you know went on to win the Grand Final the next week. Fervent means playing full time, not three quarters. It means start and

finish well. I think of my wife who runs marathons. She doesn't just start a contest, she runs 42 kilometres until she gets across the finish line. Amazing feat, isn't it? That's the same fervency we should have towards other believers. To the end!

Summary

Here are some things I see as we conclude, and you can add your thoughts to your own list.

- 1) Attitudes checked will produce actions of honour to the Lord
- 2) What attitudes we maintain effects our lives long before others
- 3) Duties done albeit with bad attitudes help others, but warrant no praise to the doer

Invitation

Dear friends, God wants us all to be born again to a living hope. If you are without that hope, despairing for your soul or for the disrepair of the world, or of your family or friends, God wants you to have true hope. This hope will not disappoint; it's alive and supportive. And that hope is found in Y'shua. He is the anchor of our souls, and the evidence in is. He rose from the dead, just when all hope was apparently lost. That resurrection powered him from the grave and into the seat of authority in heaven. He is there for you, risen over our circumstances and risen to

new meaning and life. Open your heart to him today. Receive Y'shua as the lamb slain from the foundation of the world for you.

If you have never experienced this eternal and new life about which we are speaking, if you are yet outside this relationship with God, then pray with me. I'll say a few words in prayer and if these words are your words, that is, if you agree with this prayer, then say it with me. In this prayer I will ask God to forgive us of our sins, whatever they might be and to make us born again. If that's what you want, then pray this prayer with me. Lord forgive me in the name of the Messiah Y'shua. Forgive me for all my sins, and make me clean again. I believe you died and rose again. Give me eternal life in the name of Y'shua, and make me born again. I trust you. Amen.

Actual Text

1Pet. 4.1 ¶ Therefore, since Messiah has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.

For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousals, drinking parties and abominable idolatries.

And in all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excess of dissipation, and they malign you;

but they shall give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

For the gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead, that though they are judged in the flesh as men, they may live in the spirit according to the will of God.

1Pet. 4.7 ¶ The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.

Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.

Be hospitable to one another without complaint.

As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Messiah, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

1Pet. 4.12 ¶ Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you;

but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Messiah, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation.

If you are reviled for the name of Messiah, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

By no means let any of you suffer as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler;

but if anyone suffers as a believer, let him not feel ashamed, but in that name let him glorify God.

For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner?

Therefore, let those also who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.