***All Things New***

New-Life Lessons from the Apostle Peter’s First Letter

**New Behavior: A Matter of Life and Death**

Or, Haven’t we wasted enough time?

1 Peter 4:1-6

It’s been said that people will do anything to make their lives better, except change. The Law said “do it or else,” but grace has better motivation, namely, our union with Jesus. Peter says that because of our union with Christ, we have a past break with sin, a present motivation to avoid sin, and an assurance of future vindication at the Judgment. And he says that we’ve spent enough time already pursuing the follies of sin. Let’s try what works, namely, righteousness.

***As Christ suffered for and died to sin, so must we! vv. 1, 2***

The suffering and death of Jesus have been Peter’s theme: His sprinkled blood (1:2); resurrection from the dead (1:3); sufferings of Christ (1:11); precious blood (1:19); God raised Him from the dead (1:21); Christ suffered for you (2:21); He bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteous-ness (2:24); by His stripes you are healed (2:24); Christ died for sins once for all (3:18); put to death in the flesh (3:18); through the resurrection of Jesus Christ (3:21). His challenge: Arm yourself with that same sin-battling resolve. Romans 6:1-11; Hebrews 9:24-28

***Think about it. Haven’t we wasted enough time living like those around us who now face judgment?*  vv. 3-5**

If Jesus died for sin, and we have died to sin, we no longer live in sin and must no longer walk in sin. The clean break Jesus provided us in our freedom from sin (reflected in our baptism) must now work itself out in our lives. You have passed from death to life. Now, ACT like it, and not as those who continue in sinful lifestyles and scoff at holy living. Romans 6:12-23; Colossians 3:1-11

***That is the hope of the gospel: while it warns that we have died in Adam (the “flesh”), it proclaims spiritual life and hope of the resurrection in Jesus.***  v. 6

Peter is saying precisely the same thing as Paul does in Romans 8:10: “If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is alive because of righteousness” (which, of course, comes only through the gospel).

***Applying Truth to Life: Trying what works. . .***

The gospel is not something which we believe and then leave behind for “deeper” truths. Everything good in our lives grows out of the gospel, and is accessed only by faith. Where we go wrong is in thinking that “by faith” means impractical or unrealistic. It does not. It means treating others as you want to be treated, for example, because your own security in Christ enables you not to be manipulative and angry. It means giving generously because you know God well enough to trust Him to make up any “deficit.” It means spending time serving others because you realize, in Jesus, it’s not all about you, *etc*. The gospel “works” because it frees you from the prison of self and has you drinking at the fountain of God’s joy and grace. Galatians 5:16-26