

1Peter 11-05-27b

We resume our study now in 1 Peter chapter 4. Peter has said, The end of all things is at hand, therefore. And this is our motivation. And we don't want to forget that the reason we're doing these things is not because we think it's going to help us get over in the present or in a circumstance.

Like, well, the secret key to success in relationships or in economic prosperity or whatever is I'll do these things. Remember, the Jews had trouble with thinking that there was a way to game the system. I'm going to outfox God.

I'll do some righteous things and He'll have to bless me. You know, it all goes back to Jacob wrestling with the man until dawn. It's just emblematic of all of his descendants as you see them depicted in the New Testament.

I will not let you go until you bless me. And ever after, when I have this blessing, I'm going to know that I got it because I wouldn't let you go. I'll make you bless me.

And this is why Paul says they have a zeal for God, but not according to righteousness. And they haven't figured out the righteousness of God and they're trying to establish their own. Well, we don't want to fall into that trap.

We've got good examples that should warn us off from that. And this loving thing isn't a gamesmanship sort of a thing. It is a genuine responsibility that we have.

When we are tempted to be aggravated, when we're tempted to be impatient, when we're tempted to kind of get on our horse and say, you know, I'm Rodney Dangerfield's illegitimate child and I deserve some respect. Give me some respect. We instead look to that mind that Christ had and we answer it with love.

We extinguish the power of sin with love. We cover it over. We blot it out.

So then he goes on to say, Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. And it always makes me smile when I see be hospitable because, you know, in the Middle East, hospitality is a great iconic behavior. Your worst enemy, if you show up, they'll sit you down and pour coffee and go through all the amenities because it's a point of pride.

We are hospitable. Well, this word is interesting because what it basically means is love the strange. So, you know, look to the right hand and to the left and whoever you see that's strange, that's who you love.

Philozenoi. You know, xenophobic means I don't like anything that's unfamiliar. I don't want foreigners.

I don't want strangers. Xeno means strange, foreign, unexperienced in the past. Well, this is philos plus xenos.

Philos, xenos. Philo, xenia. Now notice it's a different form of love.

There's somewhat of a distinction between agape, which is an active love. Agape is love that doesn't just sit there saying, okay, I do love you. It expresses itself in some way.

The other person knows when you agape them. I would say one of the fundamental differences between agape and philos is in agape, the person who's getting the agape should know it. They should know, you know, they should feel the love.

They should get the love. You know, God so loved the world He gave His Son. Who doesn't know that the Son of God came to die for the sins of the world? The Holy Spirit communicates that message to every man.

God's love is manifest. Agape love is manifest. You can tell when somebody is doing the agape and you're the recipient.

Philos is much more of an attitude. You know, philo-sophie, philo-sophia. I love wisdom.

I'm a philosopher. Well, philosophy doesn't know if I care about it or not, right? I can be philosophical about a lot of things and people may or may not know it. Philos really is much more internal.

It is my policy. It is my attitude. It is my leaning or my bent.

And in order to have this steady, unchanging, unflagging love, we have to be willing to accept, willing to take in stride the strange. And that's what it means. Hospitality is being kind, in the Middle Eastern sense, it's being kind to strangers, someone you don't know well.

Why are you hospitable? Why could I go to any artillery battery in the Lebanese army and those guys, sight unseen, would treat me with great courtesy and great hospitality? You always get your three cups of coffee, your three little demitasse cups of liquid sludge. Man, the days, once a week, we had to go around and visit all the batteries and make sure that everything was up to snuff. And so you go to the 45th battalion and here's the first battery.

You go in there, oh, Lieutenant, hello, wonderful to see you. And it's a great insult if you don't accept the hospitality. So you get the little demitasse cup.

Down she goes. You get the second cup while you're talking and looking things over. Down she goes.

When they offer you the third cup, it is time to leave. It's a universally understood, unspoken

language. That's how you know that your host has had enough or has to be somewhere.

They'll never tell you, well, gee, oh, look at the time. They'll never do that. They'll say, more coffee? More coffee? If you've had two cups, you have got to get up and leave.

That's the sign. But see, it's very elegant. It's very classy.

You've got to admire the development of this. But it's hospitality. They've never seen me before.

I could have been General Ibrahim Tannous and he wouldn't have gotten any better or any more coffee than I got. And he would have gotten up and left at the third cup also. It's just a wonderful system.

But philo xenoï. And this is a present idea. In other words, always be.

When strange stuff happens, just take it in stride. Somebody is off their feet. They're having a bad day.

They short you. They snap at you. They do whatever.

Something goes haywire. Take it in stride. This is my policy.

This is my philos. I deal with the strange. Strange is my business.

Just throw me the strange. I can handle it. That's part of love.

The active remediation of sin that is inflicted on us is agape. And that's occasional. Something goes wrong.

There's a sin that happens. I'm going to send agape at that. And I'm going to consistently do that.

But my policy, my ongoing mood is I'm not going to be thrown off because, well, that's never happened before. Since when did somebody break my 18th century piece of china? That never happened. People can understand if I get upset over that.

We had a mishap here. And my dearly beloved 60-year-old refrigerator took a hit to one of its glass pieces. And it deeply troubled me.

But the person who sadly happened to be the one to have the accident is somebody I dearly love. And I thought, you know what? Which do I want? The 60-year-old refrigerator or this person I love? And so, not a problem. Although you notice it has lodged in my mind.

But we have to remember the difference between our brotherhood in Christ and these details of life and not exchange our birthright in Christ, our fellowship and our family in Christ for a mess of pottage. Expend it, trade it away, and in some cases do damage that we can't get back over something that, especially in retrospect when things cool down, you think, why did I let that get

under my skin? What a ridiculous thing. Why would I sacrifice a relationship over an incident? It's so ridiculous.

But that's the way we're built. We're built ridiculous. We are built strange.

And we have got to be willing to deal with each other's xenos. Be hospitable. Be accepting of the unexpected is how I would translate it colloquially.

With a view toward one another. Now there are a bunch of one another's in here. He starts out, he says, Above all, have love with a view toward each other.

He autos. Here it's ace alelus. Each other.

There's much more of a reciprocal idea. The idea in the agape is when you're doing this, it's really kind of one directional because somebody has messed up and you're sort of within your rights to be offended, but you're going to answer that with love. That steady love toward the other.

Here it's alelus. Everybody is strange. Everybody is dealing with everybody's strangeness.

Let's all have this same attitude without grumbling. There's the real challenge. Ah, no problem.

But you know, this is not the first time that's happened. We just can't leave it alone. We can't let it lie.

We can't be gracious. We can't be gracious. We say, you know, and then we start without grumbling.

No gongusmon. And it's a very onomopoeic word. It just comes up from the depths.

Gongusmon. It's right down there in your guttural, visceral, I just can't help letting somebody know what a saint I am in forgiving you for this terrible thing. As each one has received a gift, verse 10, minister it to each other.

Eis he autos. Eis alelus. With a view toward.

All of these are the fabric that binds us together as brothers and sisters in Christ. As each one has received a gift. Interesting statement, because you tend to think, oh, well, if you want to know about gifts, go to Corinthians.

Paul talks about gifts. You know, right around there, the love chapter 12 and 14 of Corinthians. You've got all this stuff about gifts.

And here's the gifts. What is my gift? What is the list? Prophets, apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. What are the other gifts? And there used to be this whole big thing on I've got to figure out my gift.

I'm going to go down the list. You don't have to figure out your gift. You don't have to know what your gift is.

Some gifts don't even have names. Each one has a gift. Well, how can my gift function if I don't know what it is? And some of us know what it is.

I'm pretty sure what my gift is. And I know what some of my gifts are not. The reason people are agonizing over their gift is they are not spending enough time with one another.

If you want to know what your gift is, get with one another. Because that's when the Holy Spirit is going to activate it. Spiritual gifts are for the edification of the body of Christ.

And I can't tell you how many times nobody in present company, but I've talked to believers in the past and they say, you know, I'm really struggling. I can't figure out what my spiritual gift is. But this is a person that spends almost no time in fellowship.

Doesn't really make an effort to be around other believers and so on. Well, of course, you're not going to know what your gift is because you're not in the environment that's going to wake it up and give God the opportunity to develop it and blossom it and cause it to be of benefit to others. Gifts are one another benefitters.

And if you're not with one another, your gift is dormant. And you'll never find out what it is. So instead of worrying about the name of it or how can I cultivate it or whatever, just cultivate fellowship.

Receive the blessings that other gifts give and your gift is going to come out in a reciprocal fashion. And you may never know what it is, but people are going to say, boy, you know, it's such a blessing in that group or in that fellowship or with that person because God knows what He's doing. God put the gift there.

God knows how it works, knows who's going to benefit from it. Leave it up to Him. He's a much better planner and activator of these things than we could ever be.

Each one has received a gift. Fill in your name here. You have a spiritual gift.

You are a benefit to the body of Christ. When you can assemble with believers of like mind, you are a blessing. Every single one of you.

Each has a gift. It may not function every single time. You may not be able to say, well, here's the description, here's the news report of what happened, but that's where it functions.

That's what it's for. That's why we do not forsake the assembling of ourselves together. And if we're distant, we still try to communicate in some fashion because even through communication, these gifts can function.

It can function through a letter. It can function on a phone call. It can function in an email.

Not a forwarded email. An email you write. Everybody that knows me knows this.

Never forward me an email. I have been an email manager too long. I've already seen all of them.

There's nothing you can send me I haven't already seen. And it's impersonal. It's like I'll let somebody else talk to you.

Here, somebody sent this to me. I'm going to send it to you. It's lazy.

If you want to talk to me, take the time to compose something. This is why you never hear from me because I don't have the time to compose something that is very meaningful. But if you're going to communicate, your communication can be an avenue of blessing.

Our communication, our conversation is the arena in which these gifts often function. That's how we find out what needs are. That's why all of a sudden somebody shows up with a meal or with support or with encouragement or with prayer or with any one of a number of things because we communicate.

We are in touch. We are in contact. And that's a wonderful thing.

And God's super intense. God activates. God elegantly interweaves that fabric.

And he does such a great job of it. We don't need classes. We don't need to formalize it.

We don't have to give it a name. We just try to make sure that we are each where we're supposed to be doing what we're supposed to do spiritually. And God produces the fruit.

Where the tree planted by the rivers of water, God sets the signs and the seasons. And in the season of fruitfulness, we bear fruit. Each one has received a gift.

Minister, received as heiress. When did you receive your gift? Actually, it kind of depends. If you think in the mind of God, it could have been in eternity past.

But at the point of our salvation, when the God of the Holy Spirit comes to reside, it is a spiritual gift. It can't function without the Holy Spirit. So certainly at salvation, that would be the heiress tense locus of action.

But it says minister. This is diakonunes. But this is a participle.

Be ministering. It's a present, ongoing, sort of a constant. You got the gift.

Everybody has gotten the gift. Be ministering. And this is availability, preparedness, status.

I'm not wallowing in sin. I'm not running from God. I'm not forsaking the assembling.

I'm not doing things that would interfere. I'm doing what I'm supposed to do. Be ministering it, eis healtos, to one another.

These are in-house gifts. With the exception of evangelism and a few others, these are largely for the building up of the body of Christ. And so, minister it to one another as good stewards.

Oikonomoi. The oikos was the house. It's in-house.

You're a house steward. You serve. You make a meal.

You change the beds. You do the laundry. You sweep the floor.

Whatever you do. This is what the house servants did. And we keep good house.

We function in the house. This is not a field slave. This is a house servant.

Oikonomoi. Of the manifold grace of God. We are stewards of grace.

Our spiritual gift isn't something for our benefit. I need to find out my gift so that I can be fulfilled. I need to find out what my gift is so that I can somehow enter into a new spiritual plane of happy experience.

We're a steward. We're a house slave. A channel for God's grace.

God's manifold grace. And because it's manifold, we don't always understand how it works. We don't even know that it has worked.

I cannot tell you the number of times that I have taught Bible class, gone back afterward, and just been kicking myself up one side and down the other. I can't believe how badly I slaughtered that material. I didn't cover half of what I prepared.

Went off on a rabbit trail. Didn't finish. Never got to my point.

I slapped myself around invariably within a day or two. Somebody came up and said, Boy, you know, Sam, that was just the best class. I've been wondering about that for years.

And I think, what? That was a complete rabbit trail. I thought that was terrible. And God knows what He's doing.

And despite our failures, despite our weaknesses, despite whatever lacks that we have, it's the manifold grace of God. Don't sell it short. Because, you know, we have treasure in earthen vessels.

And we shouldn't be sitting around worried about how many cracks are in the earthen vessel. Look at the treasure that God can put in them. And we just want to be available.

We want to be ready. We want to be useful to the Master. We are stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Don't sell the grace of God short. Don't get yourself in the way and say, oh, well, I could never... it took me an extra year to go to seminary because I kept thinking, well, I just can't conceive of myself ever doing that. And I just wasted a year's time because I couldn't reconcile myself.

I had pastors up on a pedestal, and I thought, oh man, they're up there and I'm not one of those guys. And it's silly. Don't sell the grace of God short.

It isn't us. It's God. Manifold grace of God.

Poikilae is a wonderful word. It's used in a lot of different places in Scripture. And that's what is used here.

The manifold *caritas* teu. Well, it brings us to verse 11. If anyone speaks... And you notice in your New King James it says, *let him speak* is in italics.

And it's emphatic in Greek. When you leave the verb out, it's emphatic. The ellipsis is very powerful.

If anyone... And actually it says, if someone speaks. If someone speaks as the *logia* teu. And this really ties into the previous verse because remember it says the manifold grace of God.

We are stewards of the grace of God. If anyone speaks, it's the word of God. Going back to this idea of stewardship.

Your gift might be speaking. This is actually describing the gifts. It doesn't mean if anybody utters a word.

If you've got some sort of a gift that involves speaking. Or if almost every gift is going to involve speaking of some sort. But your speech, hopefully, the manifold grace of God is going to come through as the *logia* of God.

If anyone ministers, and once again, let him do it is not in the Greek. If anyone *diakoneo*. If anyone waits tables.

If anyone does a setup for Bible class. If anybody makes some food. If anybody makes a meal.

If anybody makes a call to find out if somebody is okay. If anybody says, hey, let me send out the word so that we can all pray. If anybody sets up or tears down the equipment for Bible class.

If anybody does anything for one another. I'm just talking about things for class. There's a myriad of other things that we do for each other through the week when we're not at class.

If anybody is doing these things, you could be making the bed at home. You could be making a meal at home. You could be making money to bring home so that you have groceries and beds to make and so on.

But whatever you do, if you are doing a service, a diakoneo, it should be as according to or as out from the ability which God supplies. And this is *hos ek iskuos*. *Iskuos* is that great word for strength.

This is strength that gets things done. This is picking up heavy weights. This is muscle strength.

If anyone ministers, let it be, let that manifold grace of God be as out from *ek*, as out from strength which God supplies. We shouldn't be having to man up and generate the motivation to do this thing out of ourselves. It ought to be strength that God supplies.

So here's my question. Where is the strength that God supplies? How does the power of God come into the life of the believer? Through the word of God and the spirit of God. We need regular exposure to and meditation on with emphasis on the latter.

Bible class is not nearly as important as meditation. If you had a choice of ten Bible classes and one meditation, or one Bible class and ten meditations, you should choose the latter. Because it isn't what you hear, it's what we internalize.

It's what we take to the bank. It's what changes us and makes us think and act differently. So where does this strength come from? How does God supply strength? We go back.

We've got the word of God fresh. We've got the Holy Spirit activating it, impressing it on our hearts, motivating us, encouraging us, strengthening us. So that, in order that, *henah*, this is the result, the purpose.

In order that, in all... And it doesn't even have a word for things. It's *en-pasi*, in everything. You know, you talk about Pan-American.

It's all the Americas. Well, this is where it comes from. *Pas*, that in all.

Hathaos, the God may be glorified. This is from *Doxa*. Through Jesus Christ.

To whom belong. Does your King James read the same way mine does? See how it says to whom belong? So it looks like the glory belongs to both God and the Lord Jesus Christ, right? To whom, plural, belong the glory and dominion forever, right? Well, that's not what it is in Greek, and I don't know what happened here. But this is singular.

To whom belongs. There's only one of them in view when Peter says this. It isn't like they both don't have glory and dominion, and I think that's why they fudge the translation.

But Peter doesn't say they both are in view here. He says that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ to whom belongs.

The to whom here is Christ. Because we're going all the way back to verse 1. Since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, God will be glorified through Jesus Christ. His work is vindicated.

His actions on our behalf bear their fruit. God is glorified through Jesus Christ and to Him belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. It's the Lord Jesus Christ who is in view.

And you can kind of see this. Occasionally the commentators say, well, we don't really know what the antecedent of whom is here. It's got to be one or the other because it's not plural.

So maybe it's that God may be. But it's a little bit redundant if you talk about God the Father. In all things God may be glorified to whom belongs the glory.

It just doesn't fit. And when you follow the flow of Peter's thought, it's very clear, and he says this in other places, that it is Jesus Christ to whom belongs the glory and dominion. God has given Him dominion.

He is the head of all things to the church. Kings and thrones and everything else are under His feet. God has given Him that dominion because of His work on our behalf.

To whom belong the glory and dominion. It isn't just for us. It's not that if we're loving and philosophical about it all that it's going to make for a better life.

This reflects the glory of Jesus Christ. This honors Him. This vindicates and fulfills the purpose for which God sent Him into the world.

We become an integral part of the fabric of the plan of God when we do these things. We accomplish our purpose. We fulfill our mission.

And it is all to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. And what better way to express our gratitude and our appreciation for the Lord Jesus than to vindicate His work on our behalf? To fulfill the potential that He has given us that we didn't deserve, that we didn't earn, that we could have never attained for ourselves. And so when somebody makes it difficult to love, when somebody makes it difficult to minister, when somebody makes it difficult to be constant, when somebody makes it difficult to pray, you know, love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, pray for those that spitefully use you, how do you generate these great prayers when I keep getting distracted? Lord, please do something nice for that confounded rascal that shorted me on this and did that to me and I just get right off the rails thinking about what a rascal they are.

How do we do that? We don't focus on the person. We don't focus on the sin. We don't focus on the failure.

We focus on the Lord Jesus Christ. It is His glory that is at stake. It is His work that is at stake.

And if we love Him and we have our eyes on Him, that's who we're serving. We are diakonoi. We are oikonomoi.

We are stewards and servants for the Lord Jesus. That's who we're serving. That's who we're pleasing.

That's who we're glorifying when we accomplish these things, when we listen to these great exhortations from Peter. Well, this brings us to a good place to begin next time, which is at verse 12, where he says, Beloved, do not think it strange. And once again, we're going to have a form of the word xeno, xenos, or xena if you like.

Xena, princess warriors, that just means strange. I think it's very suitable. But that's where we'll pick up next time.

Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for this great passage of Scripture and the truth that it contains. Thank You for the ministry of Your Holy Spirit, who is able to transcend the limitations of presentation and of our concentration and is able to take Your truth and make it flame and make it live in our souls.

We pray that as we meditate on these things, we will be able to see their practical outworking in our day-to-day experience in the specific circumstances that we are facing right now and in the days to come. And that we will truly be able to fulfill this purpose and to reflect the glory of the Lord Jesus. We thank You for Him and we pray these things in His name.

Amen.