Today as we continue with our series of messages from the Book of I Peter I would like for you to turn to the 4th Chapter of I Peter and let’s read verses 1-6.

READ: I PETER 4:1-6

PRAYER

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INTRODUCTION

The term “Christian” has become so watered down and used so loosely in our day and time, one has to wonder how many people really understand what it really means to be a Christian.

Consider some of the common myths:

MYTH #1

Being Born in a Christian Nation Makes You a Christian

Some people actually believe that because they were born in a “Christian nation” such as America, that makes them a Christian. Others say, “I have been a Christian my whole life, I was raised in a Christian home.” Since when does “where one was born” make him or her a Christian?
MYTH # 2
Living a good, moral life makes you a Christian.

Would you believe a lot of ATHEIST actually live clean, moral lives? There are lots of people who believe because they have never murdered anyone or robbed a bank or done any of the bad things a lot of other people have done that makes them a Christian.

MYTH # 3
Going to Church Makes You A Christian

While it is true that Christians go to Church, attending Church doesn’t make one a Christian. Last Sunday four out of ten Americans went to Church. But does that mean all of those people are Christians? NO! Even some thieves, child molesters and drug dealers go to Church, but that doesn’t make them a Christian, does it?

MYTH # 4
Doing Good Things For Others Makes You A Christian

While it is true that Christians are to do good deeds for others and love our neighbor as ourselves, just because one does good deeds does not make him or her a Christian. Probably everyone of us knows people who would “literally give someone the shirt off their back” to help others. While that kindness and generosity is very admirable, it doesn’t make that person a Christian.

MYTH #5
Believing in God Makes You A Christian

Eight of ten people in America say they believe in the existence of God. Does this mean eight out of ten Americans are Christians? NO! The scriptures teach us that “Even the demons of hell believe in God and shudder.” Does that mean demons are Christians? Absolutely not?

MYTH #6
Reading the Bible Makes You A Christian

Karl Marx once wrote about his fascination with the Gospel of John. Did that make Karl Marx a Christian? NO! He was a devout atheist. Former Russian dictator, Nikita Khrushchev read the Bible when he was a boy and so did Adolph Hitler. Did that make them Christians? NO!
MYTH #7

Praying Makes You A Christian

While it is true that Christians are to be a praying people, just because one prays does not make him or her a Christian. The late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat always carried a prayer rug with him when he traveled. And five times a day he would get down on his knees and pray. Anwar Sadat was not a Christian, he was a Muslim. One could say a hundred or even a thousand prayers a day, but that wouldn’t make him or her a Christian.

So what does a “real christian” look like? Well there is only one place we can find our answer and that is in the word of GOD.

After teaching us about the importance of being baptized into Jesus Christ in the previous section of scripture, Peter now proceeds to show us “What A Real Christian Looks Like” in these first six verses of chapter four.

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First, let’s consider………..

I. The Life Christ Calls A Real Christian To Live (vs. 1, 2 )

v. 1 Therefore, since Christ suffered in His body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.

v. 2 As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for human desires, but rather for the will of God.

1. When Peter penned those words, “since Christ suffered in His body” you can just imagine all the images that “flashed” through his mind.
Peter had witnessed Christ’s suffering firsthand. He had seen people reject Christ……and mock Him……and ridicule Him……and lie about Him……and falsely accuse Him.

Peter saw one of Christ’s own followers betray Him and sell Him out to the enemy. And I’m sure his own denial of Christ, was weighing heavily on his mind as he wrote these words.

Peter had seen the battered, disfigured face and body of Christ after the Roman soldiers had beaten Him beyond recognition.

And then there were those haunting flashbacks of Jesus’ twisted, mangled body agonizing on the cross for six hours before He finally died.

2. Why had Christ suffered all these terrible things? Because He lived a GODLY life in an UNGODLY world!

3. In verse 1 Peter now makes a connection between Christ’s suffering and ours.’ This is extremely important so let’s read it again slowly.

   v. 1 Therefore, since Christ suffered in His body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.

4. When Peter tells us to “arm yourselves also with the same attitude” he is using a military term. He is literally telling us, that when we truly live for Christ in this ungodly world we better put our “spiritual armor” on because we are going to have a battle on our hands.

   Just as Christ suffered for living a godly life in this ungodly world, we will too if we truly live for Christ.
5. You notice at the end of verse 1 Peter says, “Because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.” We’re going to come back to this statement in just a few minutes, but for now I want you to notice in VERSE 2 the kind of life Christ calls every true Christian to live.

   V.2 As a result, he does not live the rest of his life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.

6. This is what Christ meant when He said in Matthew 16:24.....

   “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.”

7. Simply put, when you and I accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior we said YES to God and NO self. Now what does that mean?

   - That means I will say NO to any habit or sinful pleasure that dishonors GOD. It means when it comes to choosing between what makes ME happy and what makes GOD happy, I will choose the latter.

   - It means when people try to get me to do things that are contrary to GOD’S WORD, I say NO to those people. And if that means I have to cut off my friendship with those people and get some new friends, I do it!

8. Now some might say, “Wow! That’s not easy!” That’s right, its NOT easy. But you won’t find one single verse of scripture in the New Testament that says the Christian life is supposed to be easy.

   Christ has called us to live a life of sacrifice, selflessness and self-denial.

   That is the kind of life a REAL CHRISTIAN seeks to live.
Secondly, let’s consider........

II. The Life Calls A Real Christian To Forsake (v. 1b, 3, 4)

1b He who has suffered in his body is DONE WITH SIN.

3 For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do----living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and detestable idolatry.

4 They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you.

1. Remember the Christians who first received this letter from Peter were undergoing terrible persecution. When they first accepted Christ they were filled with great joy. But then the reality of the world’s hatred toward them began to sink in.

As a result, a number of Christians in those days were ready to go back to their old sinful ways, just so the hatred and hostility toward them would stop.

2. Peter admonishes the Christians of his day as well as all of us to “be done with sin once and for all!”

He goes on to say, “you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do.”

In other words, Peter is saying, “Look at how much of your earthly life you have already wasted in sin.” You can’t get those years back. Its time to move forward!
3. Peter then lists six specific areas of sin every real Christian will forsake.

(A) I must forsake **DEBAUCHERY**

Now there’s a word you don’t hear every day. What does it mean? **Debauchery** basically means “unrestrained living.” “If it feels good, do it!” “As long as it makes me happy and I’m not hurting anyone, it’s alright.” That is debauchery! And Christ commands us to forsake it as a way of life.

(B) I must forsake **LUST**. I’m sure every person here has experienced this. You’re sitting there watching a show on TV when they break to a commercial. All the sudden there’s a scantily clad **Victoria’s Secret model** who obviously is hiding no secrets, seductively walking across your TV screen. And to make matters even worse, there sits your children or grandchildren, seeing the same thing you are seeing. It’s more than embarrassing, it is an insult!

That’s just one example of the kind of lustful images we are bombarded with every single day.

Christian men, especially, listen very carefully! Satan has placed all kinds of sexual landmines around us: **movies, TV shows, magazines at the checkout, websites, pornographic magazines, billboards along the highway, sale flyers in the newspaper……THE LANDMINES ARE EVERYWHERE!** This is why we who are Christian men have got to set very strict boundaries. We must ask the Lord to build a fortress around our mind and heart to protect us from the barrage of sexually charged images that permeate this society.

And Christian women, be careful what you wear! In this age when many women have thrown modesty out the window, **dare to be different!** **Dare to honor Christ in the way you dress!**
I must forsake DRUNKENNESS.

As Americans, we live in one of the most alcohol addicted societies in the world. The vast majority of Americans use alcohol to celebrate birthdays, holidays, anniversaries, pay raises and promotions.

Many Americans believe they can’t watch a ball game or a race on TV without a drink.

And you can’t have a cookout or pig-pickin’ or a picnic or a pizza or pretzels without a beer.

Christians, I believe we must ask ourselves a very soul-searching question on this matter of alcohol. And that is this:

“Would God’s Holy Spirit lead me to indulge in something the Bible speaks so strongly against, something that loosens my moral restraints and lowers my inhibitions.

Would God’s Holy Spirit lead me to indulge in something that has wrecked more marriages, something that has been the culprit in more acts of domestic violence, broken up more families, destroyed more careers, been the number one factor in most highway fatalities, been associated with more criminal acts and is the beverage of choice at virtually every activity where the Name of Christ is dishonored? broken up more families, been the cause of so many deaths on the highway, been a factor in most major crimes committed in this country, and is the beverage of choice at virtually every activity where the Name of Christ is dishonored?

I must forsake ORGIES. This one actually goes hand-in-hand with the two previous sins Peter mentioned.

Orgies are basically “wild parties” where anything goes! Drunkenness, crude jokes, vulgar language, gluttony, fist fighting, boisterous yelling and laughter, lusting, groping, mate swapping and indiscriminate sex.
Wild Parties are where lost souls go to deaden the pain of their empty lives by wallowing in the cesspool of drunkenness and perversion.

Here’s a great rule to live by: NEVER GO ANYWHERE YOU WOULDN’T WANT TO BE CAUGHT IF CHRIST CAME BACK AT THAT VERY MOMENT.

(E) I must forsake CAROUSING. In case you haven’t noticed yet, there is a direct connection between most of these sins Peter has mentioned and alcohol consumption.

In Peter’s day as well as in our own, a group of guys or gals or a mixed group, would get together and do some heavy drinking, then they would wander the streets to see what kind of mischief and trouble they could get into. That is what “carousing” means!

How many acts of vandalism.....how many physical assaults.....how many armed robberies ......drunk driving deaths.....rapes.....and murders are committed by a bunch of guys who kicked back a few beers or got high on drugs and went out “carousing” around to see what kind of trouble they could stir up?

(F) I must forsake detestable IDOLATRY

Jesus tells us in Matthew 6:24...........

No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

When we think of “idols” we think of those weird looking statues worshiped by people in heathen countries. But an idol is anything or anyone who is more important to us than Christ.
MONEY can be an idol if we put making money ahead of worshiping Christ. MATERIAL THINGS can be an idol if accumulating possessions is the most important thing in life. HOBBIES and RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES can be an idol if we allow those things to come between us and the Lord. Our JOB can be an idol. Our FAMILY can be an idol.

A REAL CHRISTIAN understands Christ will not settle for “second place.” He is either LORD OF ALL or NOT LORD AT ALL!

5. Peter concludes this section of his letter by telling us what kind of a response we can expect from the WORLD when we truly live for Christ.

(a) For one thing, we can expect worldly people to think we are “strange” because we don’t indulge in the same sinful activities they do.

(b) And secondly, it should not surprise us if they ridicule us, mock us, insult us, make fun of us, mistreat us or even persecute us.

That’s how they treated CHRIST and we who are His followers should expect no less.
CONCLUSION

As we close this morning, I want you to imagine if you will, that this is a Court Room.

- Presiding over the Court is the Honorable and Righteous Judge, Jesus Christ.

- The Defendant is you. You have been charged with being a Christian.

One by one, the members of your family......your closest friends......your neighbors......and the people who work with you every day......are brought in to give testimony about you.

After all testimony is given, those same people who gave testimony, become the jury that will decide if you are guilty or innocent.

A short time later, the jury re-enters the courtroom. The Honorable Righteous Judge Jesus Christ asks the jury if they have reached a verdict.

The jury foreman answers, “Yes, Your Honor, we have.”

Has the JURY decided that YOU ARE GUILTY BEYOND ALL REASONABLE DOUBT OF BEING A GENUINE, AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN?

Or has the JURY decided YOU ARE INNOCENT OF BEING A CHRISTIAN because of the lack of evidence?

Sound “far-fetched?” Well its not as “far-fetched” as you might think! Everyday those who know you and me best and even those who don’t know us very well at all, are judging the validity of our Christianity by what they see.

May all of us be found “guilty” of being REAL, GENUINE, AUTHENTIC CHRISTIANS!
III. The Lord To Whom Evil Men Will Give An Account (v.5,6)

(Christian, before you even think about going back to your old sinful ways, think about what is going to happen to those who live in sin.)