

It is Time!

1 Peter 4:1-5

Preface

There are certain intense situations where the best thing to do is to call a time out. We see this in sports, business negotiations, relationships and especially when dealing with children.

There are times we need a time out from our work, school and other responsibilities. There is nothing wrong with a time out.

But there must always be a corresponding time in.

Scripture Text

¹Therefore, 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. ²As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. ³For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. ⁴They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you. ⁵But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. 1 Peter 4:1-5 NIV

Introduction

Unfortunately, many Christians call a time out and **never get around to calling time in.** They say they are going to take a break from God or from serving God, but the break goes on and on.

The Bible calls us to a **full-time, fully engaged relationship** with God. It doesn't call us to an on-again, off-again, time out situation in our relationship with God.

The Bible calls us to a relationship. And **real relationships do not come and go.** They involve full-time commitment.

In our text, Peter is very clear about how our relationship with Jesus Christ should change our lives.

1. Time to stop living in the past.

When we are a Christian, it is time to stop living in the past.

Illus: When doing pre-marriage counseling, as we discuss the vows, young people often object to the wording and want to change it. They are not ready to make the real commitment.

When we make a commitment, we are putting the things of the past behind us. Marriage is an "all in" commitment. The same is true of our relationship with Christ.

Peter tells us in verse 1 that we are to arm ourselves with the attitude that we have given up our human self-indulgence desires.

Peter calls us to **live no longer by human desires but by the will of God; close up and personal.**

We must put the things of the past behind us.

Too many Christians live miserable lives because they cannot turn loose of the things of the past. The **past relationships and the past sin becomes an anchor keeping them stuck in the past.**

Because we are so accustomed to our old ways of life, sometimes it feels comfortable to go back there, even when we know our actions are destructive.

Until you end the time out and commit to a time in relationship with God that is fully involved, you will not understand what it is to live by God's will.

In order to experience the fullness of a relationship with Jesus Christ, we must be willing to give up the things of the past and live in the death and life of our Lord.

2. Time to start living in the light.

Peter is speaking to Christians and he is very clear about what must be done.

His language is very pointed, direct, and not sugar coated. He insists that we are wasting our time with certain things and he gives several examples.

Notice that Peter really believes these folks can leave all that rubbish and do something better! Peter really thinks it's possible to get out of the passions, drunkenness and revelry.

Doesn't he know that people never change? Doesn't Peter understand that if you tell a drunk to stop drinking, you might damage his self-esteem?

Doesn't Peter realize that if your mother spanked you when you were three years old, you are damaged for life and can never be any different? Poor Peter, he really thinks that people can put aside past behavior and go for the abundant life!

Peter is right, it is possible. **For God's grace can change everything. No mistake is too great for God's grace to correct. No sin is too deep for God's mercy to forgive. No failure is too horrible for God's love to overtake, and no wrong too gross for God's power to overcome.**

But in order for that to happen, one must die to self. **One must confess their sins before God, seek forgiveness in Christ.**

"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things are passed away, all things become new."

But there is no room in the Scripture for anyone to spend the rest of his life tinkering with his troubles of the past. There is no room for any of us to excuse ourselves from positive, constructive living just because we have unresolved issues in our lives.

When we commit to Jesus Christ, we not only commit to the one who can save us from all our iniquities; but **we also commit to walk away from the things that destroy us.**

Conclusion

Illus: Years ago, I used to attend the cattle auction in Hattiesburg with my father-in-law. They had these boardwalks above hundreds of cows. Everyone would wander all over the place inspecting the cattle and visiting with one another.

But about a minute before time for the sale, a forceful woman's voice would come over the PA system and announce, "It 1 o'clock, time for the cow sale." She would repeat this about three times and you knew she meant business. You would see the boys that worked there scrambling to their positions and getting ready to spring into action.

Today God is announcing to you and me, it is time. **It is time for us to put the things of the past behind us and start living for our Lord; Fully Involved and Fully Committed!**

When John the Baptist saw Jesus he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29 KJV