

May 19, 2019

Strangers in this World

"To God's elect, strangers in the world..."

I Peter 1:1

"The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear-minded and self-controlled...Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms...humble yourselves, therefore under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up."

I Peter 4:7-5:6

"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith..."

I Peter 5:8-9

Peter, like many of his contemporaries, thought that the return of Jesus would happen much sooner rather than later. So, in both his letters he points toward the nearness of ***"...the end of all things..."*** Most of us get trapped into believing that we have plenty of time. Because we don't like to think about our own end, whether it is universal or personal, we tend to ignore that day.

Peter wants us to understand that we really cannot live that way. He began this first letter by warning us to ***"...prepare (our) minds for action; be self-controlled..."*** and he ends his letter in the same place telling us to ***"...be clear-minded...be self-controlled and alert..."***

I think one of the greatest dangers we face as believers is that we no longer expect the ***"...end of all things..."*** We have become casual about the day-to-day of our own lives. We believe and therefore live like we have plenty of time. We do not! Our lives are short and our time is too easily wasted. The end of all things is coming.

Another grave danger is that we no longer live in fear of the devil. We should! Peter will tell us that our ***"...enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."*** We forget that every day we are living and working and serving on an active battlefield, a battlefield that he controls. Our enemy is always looking for an opportunity to destroy us. He is always out there; always on the hunt.

Because we have we do not fear him and we are experiencing. Again, we assail us, that draw us Satan is constantly seeking destroy us. When we are give them even greater adversary is no joke!



made him into a figure of fun do not see his hand in what we should! The temptations that toward sin, are not accidental. an opportunity to trap us; to casual about those traps we power to ensare us. Our

So, how can we live and work in such a dangerous place and not fall victim to our enemies attacks? Peter would command us to be ***"...clear-minded...self-controlled and alert..."*** Clear-mindedness demands that we honestly evaluate what we are doing and who we are.

Too many distractions, too much unnecessary information, too many cares, and concerns, and worries cloud our thinking. Satan uses the constant noise of our world to distract us from the dangers in that world. We are bombarded with distractions day by day and hour by hour until we no longer even notice them. Then, he strikes!

The Apostle commands us to be self-controlled; not once but over and over again. That means self-control really matters. Self-control means, as we have often noted, that we become

accountable for our own choices and our own behaviors. When I understand that I am in charge of every aspect of my existence, that I am responsible for every choice, then I can become self-controlled. I need to, in fact I must, live intentionally. I cannot live haphazardly or casually at any time.

Sometimes, self-control demands that I be brutally honest with myself. I must own my weaknesses, and acknowledge my failings. Excuses and justifications just allow me to hide my eyes from who I really am and what I am really doing.



Finally, Peter reminds us to be alert. There is never a time, never a place, where I can let my guard down. Satan can come at me from any place at any time with any temptation. He is always hunting for ways to destroy me. When I understand that the world I inhabit is a life-threatening place fraught with constant dangers then I live on the alert. When I think that my world is a safe and secure place, then I am easily destroyed.

As a true disciple I must always be "...clear-minded..." I must always be "...self-controlled..." And, I must always be "...alert..."