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1 Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, 2 so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. 3 For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries. 4 In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign you; 5 but they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. 6 For the gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead, that though they are judged in the flesh as men, they may live in the spirit according to the will of God.

The New York Times ran an obituary this week on Daniel Yankelovich who died at age 92. Yeah, I never heard of him either, but he was a social analyst and sort of wrote the book on market research. What drives Americans. What will they buy, or not buy.

Before him, Ford built Edsels. After him they could have avoided losing 3 billion 4 million dollars in today's money. He coined the term baby boomers, and in his long life he watched the shift in our democracy from "we the people" to "me the person". He documented that phenomenon years before anyone else was catching on.

At the end of the 1970's he wrote a book titled; **NEW RULES: Searching for Self-Fulfillment in a World Turned Upside Down.**

In it he notes that in the 1970's a shift took place from the post-war triad of values. He says the old values were self denial, family permanence, and job security. And he says what has displaced those values is various me-first guises of self fulfillment.

Divorce, the sexual revolution, amorality in personal matters and at the highest levels of business, and a host of other me-first driven changes ballooned beginning in the 1970's.

50 years later, those things have fully ripened. Divorce is down slightly because nobody bothers to get married. The economy is reeling and the only prop our house of cards economic system has is that we've figured out how to spend our great grandchildren's money, now, on ourselves.

You say, what does that have to do with Peter's verses in chapter 4 Jim. Just this. I need to remind us that many of us are frogs in the frying pan these days. We've gone down this road that our culture is on, and it's diametrically opposite of the last four words in vs. 2. . *the will of God*

The church is nothing more than a slightly more conservative version of American culture. We are just as me first as the rest of our culture. What can I get for me. Why would I go to that church, unless there's something there for me? Their music sucks. The preacher is obviously a hater.

Jesus is just a genie in a bottle that can get you some value added addenda in your quest for self fulfillment. Not only can you be assured of pie in the sky by and by, you can also milk him for your best life now. That's what he does. He can make everything fall into place so your best life now is even better than all your neighbors best lives now without him.

Churches in large population centers use market research companies like Mr Yankelovich's (although you'd have to be a very rich group to afford those folks) to do market surveys of what the local population wants in the way of a church. Churches are market driven. So the people who launch the mega churches already know ahead of time what the market segment they're launching in will support. They build to suit. Success is guaranteed. Jesus is a multi-billion dollar consumer driven business.

And then Peter comes along and blows a giant hole in the balloon. These words of Peter's are shocking. A wake up call. In view of the previous opening paragraphs, I guess we could call the subject of these verses, What are we living for. Or more to the point, **Who** are we living for?

Peter says;

1 Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, 2 so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.

Now I'm going to give you the radical interpretation of what Peter is saying here. What Peter says here all revolves around the idea of the will of God. The will of God is a concept that Jesus repeated over and over.

Jn 4:34 Jesus explained, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work.

Jn. 5:30 I can do nothing by Myself; I judge only as I hear. And My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

Jn. 6:38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but to do the will of Him who sent Me.

John 8:29 He who sent Me is with Me. He has not left Me alone, because I always do what pleases Him."

*John 19:30 When Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished." And bowing His head, He yielded up His spirit. We could substitute for the interpreter, *The will of God is finished.**

The entire Bible is about this one theme. The earth and those who dwell in it, restored to doing God's will. Hebrews 10:7 is a prophetic quote from the messiah written in the Psalms hundreds of years before He arrived. *"THEN I SAID, 'BEHOLD, I HAVE COME (IN THE SCROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME) TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD."*

Perhaps the best way to understand this is to come at it from the negative direction.

At the fall, in the garden, the will of God was forfeited. Adam and Eve were willful and decided to jettison God's will and ate the forbidden fruit. That set a series of events in motion where we find that this planet is not operating under the will of God, it's operating under the will of Satan. The authority to reign of God was forfeited to him.

It's hard to get people to understand or admit it, but there is a very real sense that the whole planet has fallen under that cursed rule. We are born as slaves to an evil taskmaster. Satan has usurped the authority to reign here. That's why the central theme in the Lord's Prayer revolves around a single statement;

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Jesus told us to pray for the cataclysmic day when Satan is deposed and this earth falls back under the will of God. Evil will be crushed. God's rule and authority to reign will be re-instated on this earth.

That happens at the end of the 7 year tribulation period when Christ returns to this globe in fiery judgement and deposes Satan, locks him up, and crushes evil. In the meantime though, Christ is purchasing people out of this world, one at a time. That's us.

When we become christians we come out from under Satan's dominion and rule, and we have new ownership. That's right, ownership. Those words "Jesus is Lord" mean something.

Slavery is all the talk these days and people who were never slaves are furious with people who were never slave owners. But the fact is, if you are a christian, a real born again, regenerated, new life in Christ christian, you are in fact a slave that belongs to Christ. He bought you with His blood. Paul reminds us, you were bought with a price, and you are not your own.

Doulos. The greek word is all over the new testament. And after the sad period of slavery in both Britain and America, our translators changed that word in every case, to say servant. Slave seemed too harsh. But a simple word study tells us that the word means exactly that. A person owned by someone else. Self autonomy negated.

And if you think about it, slavery means very different things, entirely dependent on the owner. There are evil despotic tyrant slave owners, and there are some who it is a joy to be owned by.

Matthew 11 28 - 31 is a call to slavery. Take my yoke upon you. But it's a call to come out from under an evil taskmaster to belong to someone who it is sweet to belong to. The burden of the old taskmaster, sin and death, is lifted off of you, and you find rest; freedom, in slavery when you belong to Jesus.

Matthew 11:28 *“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30 “For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”*

Therefore, the will of God, has everything to do with who is your Master in this world. There are no free agents. You either belong to Satan and are a slave to sin and death, or you belong to the Lord, Jesus, and have newness of life, a deliverance from the evil taskmaster. Thy will be done. God's will be done as opposed to Satans and the fallen flesh's will.

Now then, when you frame the ideas in what Peter says here with those ideas, it falls into place very easily.

1 Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, 2 so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.

It's a call to live as slaves to your new master. And our Master, the Lord Jesus, is our fore runner. Why did Jesus suffer? Because He was in Satan's realm doing God's will. That makes the world nuts.

In John 10, the chief priests and rulers surrounded Him on the Portico of Solomon at the temple and they said, quit beating around the bush and tell us if you are in fact the Christ.

And He said, I've already told you and you don't believe me. But, he says, even though you don't believe me, believe because of the miracles. The evidence is overwhelming. He keeps talking about My Father, My Father, and eventually He says, I and the Father are one.

They picked up stones, actually it says, and again they picked up stones to stone Him. It wasn't the first time. They'd loved to have done it before, but not a hair of His glorious head can fall until it's His Father's will and time. They picked up stones and Jesus says, for which good work are you stoning me? Which miracle was it that is causing my stoning?

Jesus said over and over and over; I have come to do my Father's will. And when that happens, when we do the Father's will in Satan's world, guess what. The possibility is always there that the slaves of this world and its ruler will pick up stones to stone you.

And Peter says, get ready, that's where we're going. Peter's point is, when we live that way, sin flees from us. When we get up every morning and say good morning Master, what's on the agenda for today? What are we doing. And usually it's "go to work and behave yourself." When we live every moment under the authority and power of our new Master, sin isn't going to be our problem. Suffering may be though.

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So what are we living for. What is the agenda of your life. Everybody is living **for** something. And Peter has narrowed that down to 2 possibilities. This world is living for themselves. It's all about me. And when I get done with that I'll live some more for me. And after that, well there's me.

Peter calls that the lusts of men. I used the word agenda. Lust works just as well. Motivation. What is the bottom line of what's motivating you? And now we're back to square one. Who do you belong to. That will define your motivation.

Peter says we have ceased from sin so as to live the rest of the time, not for me, me me, but for the will of God. Suffering is the normal

byproduct of irritating this world. And when we live for our Master, that irritates the world.

I'm preaching to myself this morning folks. I'm not standing here saying this is what I do, and this is what you need to do.

On the other hand, though, this is not given as a suggestion for upper tier Christians. This is the normal position for anyone who belongs to Jesus. Do you belong to Him? We need to examine our lives and our motivation for how we're living, who we're living for, and compare it to these words.

As Ligon Duncan always says; **This is the word of God. Hear it.** *Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.* Powerful words.

If you have an old fashioned Bible like me, take your pen and circle the word *purpose*, and then circle the words *will of God*, and draw a connecting line between the two circles. Our *purpose* is to do *the will of God*.

Paul wrote about this radical slavery to the Corinthians. The Corinthian church had not left the world behind. Some of them were involved in all of the deviate activities that the culture around them was defined by. Listen to how Paul addresses them. He sounds just like Peter.

In 1 Cor. 6:18 - 20 he adjures the church to; *Flee sexual immorality.* The word is *pornea*. We get our word pornography from this word translated sexual immorality.

Then Paul says, *every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Vs. 19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? vs. 20 For you were bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

This idea of ownership . . . by God . . . is so diametrically radical to what this world is shouting out to everyone from the day they can tie their own shoes.

The world says; there is no God. You are god. You are completely autonomous. Nobody can tell you what to do. You answer to no one. You make your own rules. You live to glorify yourself. Gratify yourself. Self fulfillment is up to you. Live hedonistically. Grab as much as you can. Encroach on other peoples space. If they're weaker than you, crush them.

I was reading this week about a family that was in line at a Magic Mountain theme park for a ride last week, and a gang of nine teens cut in front of them in line, and when they cried foul, they were beaten so badly they had to go to the hospital. Over a place in line for a carnival ride? That's our brave new world once we've set this rule book aside.

We are owned by God. We live for the glory of God. Every breath reflects those 2 simple values. If we live that way, we are no longer doing the will of the ruler of this world. We are doing the will of God.

Now Peter launches into counter point. What does the opposite of living for God look like?

3 For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries.

That's a good description of our world. And theirs. How interesting that in all of man's progress for 20 centuries, morally, our current situation sounds exactly the same as what Peter describes here.

Note that Peter perhaps plays a little favoritism to his own ethnic group and assigns these activities and desires to gentiles. Heathens. Non-jews. *For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles*

And there's something to that. Not that the Jews were any less totally depraved than anybody else, but they had the benefit of centuries of God's revealed truth. The law of God, given by Moses through the agency of angels forbid these things. In fact some of these activities would have been cause to be stoned to death in Israel.

Revealed truth had made a tangible difference in Israel. Accountability to a God who is judge of all the earth caused a real restraint. As christianity spread and culture in the gentile world was directly effected by the presence of the restraining effect of the church, morality among the depraved was restrained.

The high point could be argued but my money is on the time period of Edwardian England, 200 years after the King James translation put the word of God into every man's language, the effectual restraint of christianity on the world around it perhaps peaked.

The Authorized Version and the Puritans had that effect. Our nation was born right in this period and you could spin a globe and make a direct connection of civilization with how much revealed truth of the Word of God was available. Think about which nations thrived in this period that matches the influence of the Authorized version of the Bible.

America and England both thrived, and I'm saying there is a direct relationship between that thriving and William Tyndale, the chief architect of what ultimately became the KJV. It's interesting to me also, sorry Kirk, that the catholic nations and continents did not thrive as well as the protestants. The word of God was restricted for them. I see a direct connection. Others may dis-agree.

Now we're way down the other side of that curve, and things are going to pieces. Democracy and freedom can only survive where there is morality. We have digressed backwards to the place where our culture sounds like the culture of pagans who never had the restrictive influence of a God breathed revelation. America has reverted to paganistic heathenism.

Let's take a quick look at each of the greek words in Peter's list.

sensuality, as-elg'-i-a the root word is aselges and it means to act like brutal animals. All restraints are gone. Decency is gone. Animals are uninhibited by anything from the moral realm that would inhibit them.

Humans at the deepest level of depravity are unrestrained. They live like animals. Conduct yourselves no different than the feral horses out on the range. I saw a headline last week about people arrested for having sex right in the middle of everybody on a family beach.

Dave Dudley the truck driving musician wrote our culture's anthem in 1972. *If it feels good, do it - if it hurts, just let it lie.* No restraint.

In 2 Peter 2:7 the word is used to describe the kind of lawless abandon that was associated with Sodom and Gomorrah which God judged. No restraints. Do what feels good.

lusts, this word is epithumia and it is simply the word for strong desires, strong passions. Motivating passions.

The word itself is neither evil or good. So passions that motivate within the will of God are good. My strong desire for my wife caused me to get up every morning and go to work to meet my families needs. The same passions outside of the will of God motivate men to do evil things.

That's how Peter uses the word here. A passion that is misdirected. We all have those passions. Whether they are restrained within God's will and used to honor Him, or unrestrained, to just go get what you want, is the difference. The use here is the latter. As Richard Rawlins says; *Get you some of that.*

drunkenness, oinophlugia From the word for wine, oinos. and phlugia which means to bubble up and overflow. Too much wine - excessive wine. An interesting choice because there is another word that is most often used for intoxication.

This word seems to work in conjunction with the next one. The wine bubbles over and it leads to;

carousing, komos This is where the party ends up once everyone is all loosened up by the effect of the intoxicant. This is an orgy. And the word was in common use for the pagan religious practices that did just that. Intoxication, restraints gone, orgy follows.

By the way, we like options in the 21st century. Booze has some aftereffects that are best avoided. Waking up in your own vomit is inconvenient. So why not replace the alcohol with cannabis. It's cheaper and has the same result. Our culture is in a mad dash to get there, legally.

The end result is this word. komos. Restraints are gone. Sense is gone. Inhibitions are gone. Everyone is merry. The orgy just happens.

drinking parties potos. What I just described. See above. The potos is the vehicle to get to the komos. The drinking party is the vehicle to get to the orgy. potos, almost sounds like our current word for this. polluted.

and abominable idolatries two distinct words. The second is simply the worship of something that is a foreign god. Worship of a non-god. But the word for abominable is most interesting. It's only used two times in the new testament. athemitos.

It's a compound word that comes from themis, which means customary, lawful, accepted, and A, which is the word for not. Not customary. Not lawful. Not accepted. An unacceptable combination. An impossible combining.

The same root word is used in Romans 1:26 and 27 with all of the same contributing factors. Passion without restraint. Lewdness. Carousing. Orgies. Romans 1 is where it ends up, and it defines our culture.

24Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. 25For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

26For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, 27and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. Abomination and idolatry.

Civilized society is dependent on restraints that are based in a morality that originates in God's revealed truth. This book. When the morality and restraint is rejected and removed, you end up where we are at. Civilization collapses in on itself.

And like Duane said a couple of weeks ago, you flip on the TV and it's downright scary. This society is in a mad rush to get there. We can't jettison God's truth and God's laws and civil restraints fast enough.

The police become the bad guys. The pigs are holding us back. We kneel at the football game because we hate the pigs. Quit restraining us and let us loose. That's the world according to the will of Satan, it's current king.

*VS.4 In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation, and **they** malign you;*

We see this all the time. The world takes offense to people who won't join in their dissipations. As soon as someone won't play, and they take their departure from the rest on religious grounds or even common decency and moralistic grounds, all of a sudden conscience kicks in.

When we won't do what the world is doing, it shines a light of conviction on them. There's something about group mentality that helps dull the conscience. We even hear it from our kids. Dad, everybody's doing it.

Apparently the world thinks God grades on the curve. And as long as you're at the same place as everybody else on that curve, surely, that must be OK. God isn't going to judge everybody is He? Really?

He'd have to burn the whole place down. Everybody's doing this. Surely a loving merciful God wouldn't do that. And if He would, poo on Him. I'm not going to waste time worshipping a God like that. My God loves and forgives. Everybody. No matter what.

I hear that all the time. I have a designer god that I designed myself based on how I think a god should act. And my god forgives everybody for everything, no questions asked. I'd never worship your god. Child abuser god who killed his own son.

So the world takes immediate offense the moment you say, no I can't participate in those things because I belong to God and He dis-approves of what you're doing. It's all black and white in His book. Easily understood. Crystal clear.

That sets their conscience on fire, and the usual reaction is ***how dare you judge me!*** We rarely get the chance to say, no I don't judge anybody, but this book and it's author will. Oh, and by the way, He spoke the worlds into existence with the breath of His mouth and He owns everything, including you. Which is sort of what our next verse says;

5 but they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

Peter delineates that all will answer to God. Both living and dead. Hebrews 9:27 is familiar. *It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this, the judgement.* But here Peter reminds us again that Jesus will return to this earth and those who have survived the tribulation will be judged. The living, and the dead.

6 For the gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead, that though they are judged in the flesh as men, they may live in the spirit according to the will of God.

At first this looks confusing. But a reminder; Peter has just told us that Jesus after his physical death, made alive in the spirit, went and

preached to the prisoners in the abysses. He proclaimed His victory.

Willful man can defy God and God's will with every breath on this planet. But this isn't the end. Paul gives us a glimpse of life after life.

Ppn.2:9 - 11 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Every knee in every place, living and dead, in this world or the next, will bow the knee to the will of God.

You may not have ever done God's will on this earth, but in judgement, you will bow to Him and you will do His will, in torment, for eternity.

How much better to take His yoke upon you now and enjoy the blissful freedom of slavery to such a loving winsome Master.

At work the other day I was having a discussion with one of my co-workers and he was saying, you're the only normal person here. By that he was referencing the fact that I have a functional relationship with my wife and raised a family that is thriving. Not one other person on our crew has that.

Cause and effect. I make no claim to anything. The reason that was true is because Christ has directed me in that path for 47 years. Plenty of failures along the way. But what a blessing overall. What a wonderful life me and Pam have had with just a minimum of obedience. The Lord has poured out blessing after blessing on us. SDG

JS Bach signed all of his masterpieces with SDG Soli Deos Gloria. To God be the glory. I'm just a happy, fulfilled, blessed slave.