

**TITLE:** "Between a Hard Place and The Rock: Living in Light of Christ's Coming" (Part 4)

**PASSAGE:** 1 Peter 4:10-11

**THEME:** *A mind fused on Christ's coming is focused on persevering in prayer, practicing love, and pursuing God's glory.*

**NUMBER:** 12081Pe4.10-11(92)

**DATE:** December 14, 2008

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{{Read Passage}}

[i] Last week I quoted from the Didache

Didache is 1 of t/most ancient docs. pertaining to early Xnty o/s of t/N.T. Word didache means "teaching" & it's been called an early pastoral manual, the first catechism, & a glimpse into how Jewish Xns saw themselves in light of their Gentile counterparts.

The document was disc. (rediscovered) by Philotheos Bryennios, a Greek Orthodox bishop of Nicomedia in 1873. It was published in 1886. Significant discovery, much like t/DSS.

What makes this document so attractive is it's early date. Unlike people, if you are a MS t/more ancient you are t/more attractive you are. Most scholars date t/writing of t/Didache around t/turn of t/1st c. - 80 to 120 AD. Put that in perspective, it could very well have been written w/i t/lifetime of TAJ.

That being said, it's not part of t/N.T.. It's not inspired or inerrant. but it is noteworthy & even for those things in it that may not be good theol., it gives us a better understanding of what some segments of t/CH - particularly Jewish elements - were thinking.

Not everyone reads their Didache each week, but I was reading thru one

section and discovered something relevant to our text in 1 Peter.

(can't say, "turn in your Bibles to Didache 16:1, unless you are Ethiopian Orthodox) - This is from chapter 16 ==>

1 Be watchful for your life; let your lamps not be quenched and your loins not ungirdled, but be ye ready; for ye know not the hour the hour in which our Lord cometh.

Sounds a lot like Jesus in Matthew 24-15. Be ready!

2 And ye shall gather yourselves together frequently, seeking what is fitting for your souls; for the whole time of your faith shall not profit you, if ye be not perfected at the last season.

IOW - persevere. Next, the writer turns to the last day's apostasy ==>

3 For in the last days the false prophets and corrupters shall be multiplied, and the sheep shall be turned into wolves, and love shall be turned into hate. 4 For as lawlessness increaseth, they shall hate one another and shall persecute and betray. And then the world-deceiver shall appear as a son of God; and shall work signs and wonders, and the earth shall be delivered into his hands; and he shall do unholy things, which have never been since the world began. 5 Then all created mankind shall come to the fire of testing, and many shall be offended and perish; but they that endure in their faith shall be saved by the Curse Himself.

6 And then shall the signs of the truth appear; first a sign of a rift in the heaven, then a sign of a voice of a trumpet, and thirdly a resurrection of the dead; 7 yet not of all, but as it was said The Lord shall come and all His saints with Him. 8 Then shall the world see the Lord coming upon the clouds of heaven. [Didache 16:1-8]

[ii] From the beginning the message "be ready" resonated from the church Not only a message, but a warning.

This is no "you better watch out, you better not cry, better not pout I'm telling you why - because Santa's coming.

No, this is "make your calling and election sure - be diligent in your Christian life - because the Lord Sovereign of t/Univ. is coming!

From Peter's perspective in this passage, this is where it all begins. Focused on the fact that JC could come soon. Be ready!

Other side of that is, "you never know how long you will live or when you will die." Your death will put you in His presence. Be ready to give an account to him.

[iii] The main idea of this passage can be stated in the following 18 words:

A mind fused on Christ's coming is focused on persevering in prayer, practicing love, and pursuing God's praise.

It starts by fusing our minds on t/fact that our Lord & Master could come suddenly. He will come unexpectedly. We are to be ready.

Focus of our readiness is 3-fold: prayer, love, worship.

Busy persevering in prayer, practicing love, and pursuing God's praise.

This passage comes right before a major treatment on suffering. See that in v. 12 {cite}

We have suffering & we have JC. We are X's & we are going to experience suffering. So we live, as I've put it, "Between the hard place

(suffering) and the Rock (JC).

As those who live in such circumstances what is to be our (three main points) ==> 1) Our Motivation? 2) Our Mission? 3) Our Mandate?

## I. What is our Motivation? (7a)

### A. To Live in Light of Christ's Coming

**The end of all things has come near . . .**

## II. What is our Mission? (7b-11a)

Two-fold . . .

### A. To be Serious about Prayer (7b)

**. . . therefore, be of sound and sober mind for the purpose of prayer.**

Second ==>

### B. To be Selfless in our Love (8-11a)

Serious about prayer . . . Selfless in our love . . . The love that we are to have for one another in the body is evident t/o this text.

"keep fervent in your love for one another" (8)

"be hospitable to one another" (9)

"serve one another" (10)

We're specifically referring to t/love that is to characterize our relationship w/each other as Christians.

7 aspects of that love that carry us through t/heart of t/text.

### 1. The Priority of Our Love: *It is First* (8a)

**Above all, remain fervent in your love for one another . . .**

**Above all . . .**

**a. Our First priority in the body is love**

As important as doctrine / worship / evangelism / prayer / preaching are, they are emasculated if they are not fueled by love.

**2. The Nature of Our Love: *It is Innate* (8a)**

**Above all, remain fervent in your love for one another . . .**

It is a "one another" kind of love that is an innate, or natural result of our being new creations in JC.

1TH 4:9 . . . **you . . . are taught by God to love one another;**

**3. The Depth of Our Love: *It is Fervent* (8b)**

**. . . remain fervent in your love for one another . . .**

We are to maintain a peculiar, other-worldly love for each other. A go the distance, persevering kind of love.

The effect of that kind of love is that ==>

**4. The Effect of Our Love: *It is Forgiving* (8c)**

**. . . for love covers a multitude of sins.**

This sort of love drowns out t/din of our imperfections. When our ear is attuned to t/key of brotherly love we can't hear t/pitch of pettiness.

**a. I am so proud of this body of believers**

We are so blessed that we are genuinely committed to love God and love each other. Others notice. When we have had different Christian leaders visit here, it has been t/norm that they remark about how warmly they have been treated.

We've seen so many times how our love has covered a multitude of sins. We're not a petty CH. I have my ears to t/tracks when it comes to petty Xns. I will not allow petty, unreasonable, mean-spirited, legalistic, Xns to pollute this fellowship.

That's why I'd just as soon see our numerical growth come from new converts, rather than disgruntled members of other CH.s. Don't get me wrong, there are times to leave a CH & many of you have left other fellowships to come here. But you did so for noble reasons & not out of pettiness or unreasonable expectations.

But we have what I like to call a good recipe here & we don't need to add any vinegar to t/mix.

#### **b. It's a balance - Reflected in our own CH By-Laws**

- A. We will be a church that is dedicated to the truth of God's Word. This demonstrates itself in being a church of theological integrity and personal holiness.
- B. We will also be a church that is dedicated to love. This demonstrates itself in being a church that is characterized by hospitality, mercy, grace, humility, forgiveness, and an unwillingness to tolerate haughtiness, gossip, or disunity.

#### **(1) These are things that have to be held in balance:**

##### **Commitment to Love and a Commitment to Truth**

Truth w/o love is abrasive, lifeless creedalism, Love devoid of Truth is sappy, ineffective sentimentality.

The 2 have to B fused together like Iron and Carbon to make Steel or Copper and Tin to make Bronze. Like Steel or Bronze, love & truth form a durable alloy of worship.

## 5. The Practice of Our Love: *It is Hospitable* (9a)

### **Be hospitable to one another . . .**

#### a. This is the first practical demonstration of love

Here's what it looks like. In fact, we can see that truth and love make for this sort of hospitality.

#### (1) Turn quickly to 3 John {read 1:1-8}

This is how we minister to one another.

### **Be hospitable to one another . . .**

*Hospitality is mercy in action. Mercy on a mission.*

Our brother Steve has been going thru some difficult times since his heart attack a few months ago. Along comes John & he says, "I'm going to put together a guys night out to show our love for Steve." A group of us men went out to an Amerks' hockey game.

That's one example of many I could give of mercy in action.

In fact, I think I got almost as much encouragement out of that as Steve did. Because I know enough to understand that this sort of thing is how a CH should operate. I have a big heart, but it's not big enough to encompass this entire church. It takes lots of big hearts to reach out to one another.

And I know God is exalted in that & pleased.

## 6. The Attitude of Our Love: *It is Cheerful* (9b)

## **Be hospitable to one another (how?) without complaint.**

### **1. Word γογγυσμος - murmuring, grumbling**

It's one of those onomatopoeic words I like to talk about. Onomatopoeic words are those words that sound like what they describe. Words like, "babble," \* "sizzle," "shrill,"

Most all word descriptions of animal sounds are onomatopoeic (cat - meow; dog, woof; bleating of sheep; crow of t/rooster).

The last lines of Sir Alfred Tennyson's poem 'Come Down, O Maid', m and n sounds produce an atmosphere of murmuring insects:

... the moan of doves in immemorial elms, And murmuring of innumerable bees.

"moan" and murmur" are onomatopoeic, as is the word "bees."

### **a. So is this Greek noun, γογγυσμος**

It is just like our English words "murmuring" or "grumbling."

As such it was a word used of Israel in t/LXX to describe their continued grumbling and murmuring and complaining. Not content. Always griping about something (yes, "griping" is another example).

### **b. Remember the account of Korah's rebellion in Num. 16**

After t/Exodus from Egypt during their 40 years wandering in t/wilderness. Many trials, difficulties. Lots of opportunity to gripe and complain. Some 2 million people.

Korah was discontent. And he conspired w/some others & they challenged Moses and Aaron's leadership. They grumbled, v. 11. Moses said, we'll meet tomorrow and t/Lord will decide t/matter.

They did so & God appeared B4 t/congregation & in judgement t/conspirators & their families all perished. You'd think that would have put an end to t/complaining.

We watched the shock driver's ed film, Red Asphalt in HS. I guarantee you we drove like angels t/next day. On our best behavior.

Not so w/Israel. The next day, the people came out against Moses and Aaron, grumbled against them saying, "It's all your fault! You cause our friends to die!" God sent a deadly plague & before Aaron could make atonement for t/people, an additional 15k ppl. died.

TAP in 1 Cor. chapt 10, says that these things are an example for us today, and warns -- **"don't grumble as they did and were destroyed."**

**c. You think God takes grumbling and complaining seriously?**

Why? Specifically, the people complained about the God-ordained leadership of t/Congregation of Israel. Beyond that they were complaining about God himself, as God had ordained their circumstances.

You might be complaining about someone or something. God sees it as a direct complaint against His providential nature.

**Be hospitable to one another without complaint.**

How about this? **"Mercy in action with no dissatisfaction"**

Sounds like lyrics from a rap song.

**d. Hospitality has its challenges - especially when that**

**involves my time or resources in reaching out to someone else**

Might be putting them up for a few days; Might be providing food or financial support; Might be helping them in their suffering.

We've all tried to help someone who ended up becoming a bit of a nuisance to us. We try to be patient, but it gets old fielding phone calls from someone who's needy, or having them show up at your door in need of encouragement. Times like that call for patience. For a love that is cheerful, not grouchy.

Our attitude in our love is not to be grumbling or complaining, but cheerfulness and joy knowing that God has ordained all that is for our good and His glory.

Lastly ==>

## **7. The Fruit of Our Love: *It is Serving* (10-11a)**

**a. Without question - when we look at the practice of love as hospitality (v. 9) - we're talking about serving**

**(1) The difference here is that the idea of service opens wide to encompass serving one another in the body by way of ministry**

This is looking at service w/a greater breadth than mercy in action.

Note verse 10 ==>

**As each one has received a [spiritual] gift . . .**

Literally,

**As each one has received a gift . . .** (a "χάρισμα")

"Spiritual" is the implied idea that I would add to clarify t/translation.

## b. What is a χάρισμα??

### (1) Interesting -

This Greek word has been transliterated literally into our English word "charisma" which we generally think of as referring to someone who possesses a certain charm or magnetism .

I suppose that's because we think of that indiv. as having a certain gifted demeanor that inspired devotion.

That misses the idea of what this word is about.

### (2) The word literally means "a gift"

We could extend the idea by saying "a gift of grace." The word is related to the word for grace. Grace = χάρις ; gift = χάρισμα.

Both ideas (grace and gift) come together in its use in Rom. 6:23  
**the wages of sin is death, but the *charisma* of God is eternal life.**

God gifts us salvation. It is a gift given freely by His grace in X.

Free and undeserved gift; something given to us that is unearned / unmerited. Something which comes from God's grace and which could never have been achieved or attained or possessed by effort.

In antiquity t/word was used in t/military. For example, an emperor might give his troops a *charisma*, which was a free gift of money, a bonus. It wasn't something they earned as their regular wage, they got it unearned out of the goodness of the emperor's heart.

As it relates to Rom. 6:23, we could say that we have our deserved wage - death. God, but God has replaced that wage w/His charisma -

free gift of eternal life.

### (3) But here it's not talking about the gift of salvation

Word is used 17x and the majority of its uses it's referring to what we call "spiritual gifts."

So when Peter says,

**As each one has received a gift . . .** (a "χάρισμα")

What he means is that ==>

**. . . each one has received a [spiritual] gift . . .**

**c. Nature of the gift is that is spiritual and by grace**

**d. The recipient of the gift is what? -- "each one"**

**As each one has received a gift . . .**

This is each and every Christian. No exceptions. Every Christian has received this spiritual giftedness.

**e. What is the definition of the gift?**

"Spiritual gift" but what does that mean?

**(1) Simply put**

Spiritual gifts are God-given abilities to minister to others.

God has called & equipped you to minister, to serve others w/i t/parameters of the local CH.

**(2) What sort of things are we talking about?**

We find certain lists in Scripture that tell us what these divine

enablements look like.

Note something (3 passages) - note the connection to serving one another and love.

What do we have in our passage here? Love and service.

### *I. What is our Motivation? (7a)*

*A. To Live in Light of Christ's Coming*

### *II. What is our Mission? (7b-11a)*

*A. To be Serious about Prayer (7b)*

*B. To be Selfless in our Love (8-11a)*

We're contending that 1 of t/expressions of this selfless love is serving one another in t/CH -- exercising our spiritual giftedness.

#### **(a) Romans 12:3-13**

Not only does God gift the gifts as He wills, he also gives the faith necessary to exercise them (Rom. 12:3). God's not going to gift and call you to do something that he will not enable you to do.

You may feel like you can't do it; but He will get you through.

(I had a terrible time with public speaking at one point in my life; still can get intimidated at the thought of preaching).

#### **(b) 1 Corinthians 12:4-13:1**

Apathy in the physical body. That which happens when body parts and internal organs stop functioning through disease. Apathy in the spiritual body. Anarchy in the physical body is cancer. Anarchy in the spiritual body.

## (c) Ephesians 4:11-15

One thing you may have noticed is that these lists differ from each other. Not t/same. 1 Peter doesn't even have a list, per se.

Uniqueness.

"Each believer's spiritual giftedness is unique, as if each were a spiritual snowflake or fingerprint. It is as if God dips his paintbrush into different colors or categories of gifts, on his spiritual palette and paints each Christian a unique blend of colors." [MacArthur]

There is an individuality - that's evidenced by the emphasis on "each one"

In the original text this is the first word - Words are placed up front in t/Greek language for emphasis. The emphasis is on t/fact that each single individual has received a spiritual gift / giftedness - not to be ignored - not to be misused - not for selfish gain - but for what?

**As each one has received a [spiritual] gift, use it to serve one another . . .**

*c. Nature of the gift is that is spiritual and by grace*

*d. The recipient of the gift is what? -- "each one"*

*e. The definition of the gift - God Given Abilities to minister to others*

*f. Object of the gift - outward, directed toward others (selfless)*

. . . [used] to serve one another . . .

About service, not self. Service, not self.

(1) What we have here is a participle functioning as an imperative

(a) διακονεω - to serve - related to the noun διακονος

(b) Telic Participle - "For the purpose of"

One scholar says that the idea is one of "humble service."

(2) I've found over the years that people get hung up on the issue - wondering *"what is my spiritual gift?"*

"How long have you been wondering?" *"Oh, almost as long as I've been a Christian."* "How long has that been?" *"20 years."* "What have you been doing in the meantime?" *"Praying, taking spiritual gift inventories, reading books about spiritual gifts."* "Have you been ministering?" *"No, I can't do that until I know what my gift is!"*

Something wrong! Why I don't like those spiritual gift tests that some CH's give. Get out your #2 pencil and fill in t/bubbles. You have it graded & *"Walla! Now I know what I can do!"*

Lesson is: Lesson, get to work! Serve! God will steer you toward your place in the church! Like t/old saying, You can't steer a parked car. Get moving, get serving, and God will show you where he specifically wants to use you.

(a) There are at least 4 different ways that the term "serve" is used in the N.T.

- 1) providing meals (Matt. 8:15; Mark 1:31; Luke 4:39, 10:40, 12:37, 17:8; John 12:2; Acts 6:2)
- 2) visiting those in prison (Matt. 25:44; 2 Tim. 1:18);
- 3) providing financial support (Luke 8:3; Rom. 15:25; 2 Cor. 8:19-20);
- 4) General works of service (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45; Luke 22:26-27; John 12:26; 2 Cor. 3:3; 1 Tim. 3:10,13; Philem.13; Heb. 6:10).

### (3) Don't forget - our giftedness is a demonstration of love

No matter what you do, do it out of service and love for the brethren.

I preach out of love for God and love for you. I very much look at it as my serving you.

We need what we can offer one another. Everyone has received a special gift and no one has received all the gifts! No super-spiritual-saints that are exempt from being ministered to. We all need one another. I need to be ministered to by you! Who are you to think that just because I am preaching elder in this church I don't need you!

Don't trample underfoot that which God has given you!

"But this consideration is also very important, that the Lord hath so divided his manifold graces, that no one is to be content with one thing and with his own gifts, but every one has need of the help and aid of his brother. This, I say, is a bond which God hath appointed for retaining friendship among men, for they cannot live without mutual assistance. Thus it happens, that he who in many things seeks the aid of his brethren, ought to communicate to them more freely what he has received. This bond of unity has been observed and noticed by heathens. But Peter teaches us here that God had designedly done this, that he might bind men one to another." [Calvin]

We are all embers that grow cold and need to be stirred up.

Even though he's given it to you, it is still his. He owns these gifts. We manage them ==>

**As each one has received a [spiritual] gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.**

*c. Nature of the gift is that is spiritual and by grace*

*d. The recipient of the gift is what? -- "each one"*

*e. The definition of the gift - God Given Abilities to minister to others*

*f. Object of the gift - outward, directed toward others*

**g. Responsibility of the gift - stewardship from God**

The duties and functions of a steward have been assigned to each believer. God has given us manifold grace - we are to be good stewards of that grace.

**(1) What is a "steward?"**

Stewards in antiquity were often slaves who managed the business affairs of the household. Jesus based several of his parables on the concept of the steward.

**(a) Luke 12:35-46**

Gifts are not a right, but a responsibility. Idea is one of management. We want to be found "good stewards."

1CO 4:1-2 **1 Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.**

## h. Peter gives us some examples in verse 11

**If anyone speaks, [let him speak] as the utterances of God; if anyone serves, [let him serve] out of the strength supplied by God**

. . .

### (1) What we have is a 2-fold categorization of ministry

You can take all of the gifts, all of our service, and boil it all down to speaking and serving. See this in Acts 6 - ministry of the word and of tables.

### (a) Peter may also be looking toward two primary offices:

**Elder and Deacon (teacher and servant)**

I think it goes beyond that. In looking at these Peter encapsulates all of t/gifts as they are all either outward/prominent or inward/inconspicuous. Public and private. Umbrella under which all gifts flow.

### (2) Public - speaking

**If anyone speaks, [let him speak] as the utterances of God . . .**

I tend to think that he specifically has in mind preaching.

Paraphrase==>

*"For those who preach, preach as if giving the oracles of God Himself."*

Oracles is an OT idea. Words that God has given to his people (Acts 17:38; Rom. 3:2; Heb. 5:12). Faithfulness to the Gospel and the WOG.

### (3) Private - Serving

**if anyone serves, [let him serve] out of the strength supplied by God**

...

IOW - serving can be tiresome. Don't lose heart and grow weary. Caring for others can be exhausting, and thankless. Why we need the strength God supplies. Present tense, God continually supplies by His grace.

### *I. What is our Motivation? (7a)*

*A. To Live in Light of Christ's Coming*

### *II. What is our Mission? (7b-11a)*

*A. To be Serious about Prayer (7b)*

*B. To be Selfless in our Love (8-11a)*

### *III. What is our Mandate? (11b)*

*A. That in everything God be glorified*

**. . . so that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.**

**1. Here's the reason why we focus on God for our gifts/strength and not ourselves**

It's so the focus isn't on us, but on Him. Whether public or private - God is to be glorified. ==>

It's like a funnel. You may have a prominent role or a humble role, but in reality both are done selflessly to the glory of God.

That's one reason why I don't engage in theatrics. I stick behind the pulpit. I always cringe a little when I see some preacher, looking like a 3 million dollar lawyer, walking around and talking.

How many times do I hear of someone like that and how impressed people are . . . .with him! I've said it before, don't ever be impressed with me, be impressed with God! Who am I to steal glory from Him?!

**glorified through Jesus Christ.**

**2. Sometimes we overlook these little words - "Through" Jesus Christ**

διὰ. - Personal agency. Genitive of personal agency. The means by which we can glorify God is through Jesus Christ.

"He says through Jesus Christ, because whatever power we have to minister, he alone bestows it on us; for he is the head, with which the whole body is connected by joints and bindings, and maketh increase in the Lord, according as he supplieth strength to every member." [Calvin]

All-encompassing; so that "in everything" God may be glorified.

**3. Note the benediction**

This really is a conclusion to an extended section beginning in 2:11

**To Him be the glory and power forever and ever. Amen!**

**a. Who is the "to Him?"**

The antecedent? God the Father or God the Son, Jesus Christ?

I won't bore you with the grammatical arguments of scholars as to which it may be. Some argue one way, some argue another.

One writer says that while commentators have long debated whether this benediction applies to God the Father or God the Son, Jesus Christ, "It

is best to view the designation as a blessed and inspired ambiguity--the glory and dominion belong to both God in Christ and Christ in God, forever and ever." [MacArthur, 245]

Our focus is on bringing glory and praise to our God.

How do we do that? From the context, by

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That's one way to fulfill this Mandate:

*A. That in everything God be glorified*

Let's look at it this way, Do you think God is glorified by our apathy and indifference? By our prayerlessness? By our lack of love and service for each other? By our sin?

Our that our lives might reflect God's glory by having a razor's edge focus on being ready for X's coming, being of sound and sober mind in our prayers, selfless in our love. Lavish in our praise.

A mind fused on Christ's coming is focused on persevering in prayer, practicing love, and pursuing God's praise.