

ARMED!

1 PETER 4:1-11

FCF: Life in a fallen world requires a certain tough-mindedness.

Proposition: We should arm ourselves with the same mind-set that characterized the Lord Jesus.

Objective: To motivate Christian men to adopt a Christian outlook on life.

Introduction:

Do you own a handgun? If your family were attacked by a terrorist, would you be prepared to defend them? Those who oppose the ownership over firearms have been rather quiet since last September.

Our nation was subjected to a painful wakeup call. We are living a hostile, dangerous world.

Now you are doubly exposed to danger. You may be subject to an attack simply because you are an American. There are people in this world who would delight in destroying your life simply because you are a citizen of the United States of America. Can you believe it?

But your problem goes deeper than this. You are also hated because you are a follower of Jesus Christ. At the meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis this week we heard two testimonies that were a

real blessing. We heard the two young women who were miraculously delivered from the imprisonment by the radical Taliban in Afghanistan. They have a wonderful story to tell of God's faithfulness in their time of testing. Their only crime was that of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This caused them to be arrested and imprisoned.

Then we heard the testimony of a Chinese evangelist-church starter who has just been released from prison. His only crime was that of preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Attempting to follow Jesus can cost you your life in much of our world this morning.

Should we begin to bear arms? Should we learn the art of self-defense?

The answer is "yes". Peter advocated Christians arming themselves in the first century. Following Jesus was dangerous in that day—it could result in prison time, loss of job, or even the loss of life. However Peter does not advocate beginning to bear a sword or a firearm. Rather he advocates arming yourself in the same way that Jesus armed himself. As far as we know, Jesus never owned a sword—or at least, if he owned one he never used it. Rather he armed himself with an attitude, a way of viewing life, and a way of thinking. This is how we are to arm ourselves. "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
sis.”**

**What is this important mind-set that equipped the Lord Jesus, and will
equip us to live in a fallen world?**

**I. ARMED WITH A READINESS TO DO THE WILL OF
GOD.**

**This is the issue before us in this paragraph. The thing that set Jesus
apart from other men is at this very point. He shared our humanity
at every point—with the exception of our sin. He was free from sin.
Jesus entered every day and every situation with a readiness to do
the will of His Father. We need to arm ourselves with the same mind-
set.**

1. Ready to do the will of God only.

**He expands on this mind or attitude in the next verse when he writes,
“As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human
desires, but rather for the will of God only.” These “evil human desires”
are simply desires that cause us to act independently of God, and to live
for our own pleasure. The alternative to this is doing everything for the
will or pleasure of God.**

Jesus faced this issue at the beginning of his ministry, and at the end of His ministry. Would he satisfy the appetite of his body by turning the stones into bread, and his desire for the approval of men by leaping from the temple, and his desire for power by compromising with the adversary of God? Or would He chose to be obedient only to the will of the Lord as it is revealed in the Holy Scriptures? You know the outcome of that confrontation. He chose to do the will of God only.

2. Ready to do the will of God regardless of the cost.

But the at the end of his ministry, it took another turn. It was one thing to deny himself some bread when he was hungry, and to say no to the temptation to compromise with the enemy, but would he be obedient to the will of God if it was going to cost him every thing? What if it were to cost him the shame death on the Cross? You know the answer. He prayed, “Not my will, but thine be done.” He moved forward even though He knew that it would result the separation from the Father and the awful experience of the Cross. He was ready to do the will of God regardless of the cost.

Let me apply this a bit! Are you ready to do the will of God? Have you surrendered all of life to Him? Are you ready to do the will of God regardless of the cost?

So far in your community, doing the will of God is not likely to cost you your life, but it might cost you your job. It might cost you your business. It might cost you the approval of some friends. It might cost you some social standing in the community. Are you ready to do the will of God regardless of the cost?

II. ARMED WITH AN AWARENESS OF ACCOUNTABILITY TO GOD.

This is how Jesus lived life. He lived life as a man who is accountable to the Eternal God. If we are to be prepared to live in a world like this, we must be armed with the same attitude. Peter alludes to this with these words, “They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you. But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to men in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit.”

1. Accountable to our Creator.

Peter makes it clear that the accountability to God extends to all men—the living and the dead, and the saved and the unsaved. The believer and the pagan are both accountable to God. The basis for this accountability is that all men are created by God. He is the Maker of all men. Your Maker holds you accountable for the life that He made, and the gifts that He has given to you.

This conflicts with the mind-set of the world. The citizens of this age live as though they are accountable to no one. They recognize no authority above them. They declare themselves to be above judgment, but will they ever be surprised with life is over. They will find themselves face to face with Judge of all the earth.

2. Accountable to our Redeemer.

The God who made us is also the Redeemer. He gave His Son for the Redemption of the earth. For those who have come to know Him as Savior and Redeemer, our accountability is heightened. It will be one thing to stand before your Maker, but it will be another to stand before your Redeemer. It his will be the unique experience of the Redeemed, the saved.

We will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account for so much—including all of the spiritual gifts, and wonderful opportunities that the Lord has bestowed upon us.

3. Accountable to our Master.

There is even another dimension of the relationship that we have with the eternal. He is the Master and we are the servant. This is the relationship that Jesus spoke of often. He liked to remind us that God is our Master and that we are His servants. As such we are accountable to Him.

Have you spent much time meditating on your accountability to God?

On a Father's Day it would be profitable for us to think about our accountability for our families. You are accountable to God for how you relate to your wife—Peter addresses that issue in this same letter.

You are accountable to God for how you influence your children. You are accountable to God for how your influence your community. You are accountable to God for the role you play in the life of your church.

You are accountable to God for your time,

Your money,

Your work,

Your leisure,

Your resources,

Your words,

Your thoughts,

Your all.

The word of our text is that we should arm ourselves with an attitude of accountability to God.

III. ARMED WITH A DESIRE TO HONOR GOD.

This is the truth that comes to the surface in Peter's word about our use of the gift that God has given us. He mentions the use of two different gifts in the passage—The gift of speaking and the gift of serving. These are verbal gifts and action gifts. Whichever type of gift you have received, and all of us have received at least one gift, we are to handle the gift with the desire to honor the Lord through it.

1. Honor Him in what we do.

“If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.”

Let's be honest about it—this is easier said than done. Our inclination is to do things in our own strength and to do them for our own glory. Am I not right? Yet by the strength that He alone can give, we should do what we do in such a way that His name will be exalted in the earth.

2. See Him honored in the coming of His Son.

Ultimately Peter looks beyond the present to the consummation of all things. “To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.”

This is the ultimate end and the consummation of all things.

To summarize, I arm myself with a mind-set. I think like this—

1. I am ready to do the will of God as I am able to know it.

A. The will of God only.

B. The will of God regardless.

2. I am accountable.

A. Others will answer to Him for what they do.

B. I will answer for what I do.

3. I want God to be glorified and honored.

A. Through what I do in using my gifts.

B. In the full consummation of all things.