

# The Righteous Rebellion



**1 Peter 4:1-9**

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I want to ask a question that I encountered while reading article some years ago. When you think about where we're at as a culture and where we're living, is America more like Jerusalem or Babylon? I remember hearing that question and thinking about it because you have these two cities all throughout the biblical narrative. Jerusalem would be the city where God is King and the people are living under God's order, God's rule, God's reign. Then, there is the city of Babylon where man is God and people are living however they want and desire. So as you think about the culture that you find yourself in, would you say it's more like Jerusalem or is it more like Babylon? I think it's important to think this through because if we live in a culture that is more like Jerusalem, then sin, things are against God, is rebellion. But if we live in a culture that is more like Babylon, then sin is not rebellion, righteousness is actually rebellion...doing what's right is actually what's wrong.

When I think about this, I think about people like Daniel. He didn't have to ask that question. Daniel knew he's living in Babylonian culture, a culture that doesn't share his worldview—that God is King and we live under His Word and authority—he is living in a culture of Babylon where people are doing as they please. He knows in that culture he has to resolve in his

heart not to defile himself with the king's food; he has to resolve that he will serve the Lord. I think the audience Peter is writing to is not confused about where they're living; they know they're not in Jerusalem anymore. They know they're spread out through the Roman Empire and they know they're living in a culture that doesn't share their worldview that God is King and they live their lives under His good Word. Instead, they live in a culture where people are doing whatever they want, and in this culture, because they are righteous, because they are doing what's right, they are suffering for it. In other words, they're the rebels because they're righteous, and the culture at large does not like the Christians because they are loving and living for God rather than loving and living for themselves.

So we're going to ask the question this morning, where are we in our current moment? If we're living in Babylon, then we're going to share a lot of the same problems that the people Peter is writing to is facing and we're going to suffer in the same way as they are. In other words, as we speak truth, as we do what's right, good, and true under God's authority, we're actually going to suffer for it because righteousness is the new rebellion. To do what's right is actually seen as wrong to many, and if that's true, then we're going to suffer for the sake of doing right. So, what do we do as people, as Christians who might suffer for doing what's right? Well, what I think Peter is trying to tell his congregation, and I think it's apt to us as a congregation as well, to be willing to suffer now for doing what's right so that those who are doing wrong might not have to suffer for eternity. That's our calling as Christians...to be willing to suffer right now for doing what's right so that those in the culture we live in who are doing wrong might hear the gospel, that they might feel the love of Christ, and that they might choose to turn and repent and not have to suffer forever. So that's where we're going. Let's think about the culture we find ourselves in and see how in some ways it mirrors the culture they find themselves in.

## **Scripture**

***"Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the***

***flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does. The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling."***

If there were one thing I could take out of Christianity, it would probably be suffering. That would be nice. How many of you would love to just take suffering out of the whole Christian equation? Do any of you like suffering? I would love to just not have suffering. If Christianity was just comfort, joy, everybody applauds you, it's always celebration, everybody's glad you're a Christian—that would be more enjoyable to me. But the Bible seems to constantly talk about suffering in the life of a Christian, which leads me to believe that suffering is sort of normal. If you're a believer, you're following a guy who died on a cross and suffered under the hands of men. You're following Him, so the odds are you too will suffer. That's what Peter's bringing to this congregation. They're finding themselves under suffering, and he says you should expect this and here's what to do in light of your suffering. So, the first thing we're going to do is to view suffering in relation to Christ—your personal suffering, however it's happening, however it's coming to you, we want you to view it in light of Christ. Verse 1 says, "Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking." Peter has just told us in chapter 3 that Christ suffered once for sin, the righteous for the unrighteous, that Christ has already suffered on the cross. But then at the end of chapter 3, we see that though Christ suffered, He also rose from the dead and now He's in

Heaven. Christ endured suffering that led to resurrection, it led to glory. So Peter wants us to connect our suffering to Christ's suffering.

So, let's think about Christ suffering for a moment. Did Christ suffer for doing wrong? No, Christ suffered for doing what's right. Christ always did right; He always chose God's will, so Christ suffered under the will of God. It's not that He did something bad and then now He's reaping the consequences; Christ lived under the will of God, and following the will of God, He ended up suffering a lot in His life, but ultimately on a cross.

So we're supposed to relate ourselves to Christ, what does that mean? It means that in doing good, you could often suffer for doing the very will of God, and if you are connected to Jesus, because Jesus suffered for doing good. But it wasn't the end of His story. The end of Christ's story is not that He suffered and died and that's game over; it's He died and then rose from the dead and now He's in Heaven in glory forever. And you're supposed to arm yourselves with the same way of thinking; in other words, thinking about your suffering for doing good in the same way. Yes, there will be moments of suffering, there will be moments you will suffer because you are an elect exile—you're not at home, you are a sojourner, you are passing through—and you might face suffering. That's what Christ did. Notice that Christ's suffering led to glory and your suffering also will lead to glory. The suffering is not the end of your experience, that we are going to live forever with God in a place with no more suffering; your suffering will turn to glory just like the suffering of Christ turned to glory. So, if you're suffering, we're going to arm ourselves and think like Christ, we're going to relate our suffering to the Lord.

In suffering, we really have two choices to make, and it's the choice between human passions or God's will. Notice with me in the end of verse 1, it says this, "...for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin..." It's kind of a hard verse. What does it mean that if you've suffered in the flesh, you've ceased from sin? Does this mean that if you suffer in the flesh, in your body like physical harm, you'll no longer sin? I don't think that's exactly what Peter is meaning. I'll bring a couple commentaries into this. Wayne Grudem would say this, "Whoever has suffered for doing right and has gone on obeying God in spite of the suffering it involves has made

a clear break from sin.” The idea is if you're doing what's right and it's bringing bodily harm to you, say persecution is happening, and you still choose to do what God says, then it's clear you've ceased from sin. In other words, you've made a break from sin. Sin is no longer your master but Jesus is. I think that's what Peter's trying to say, that if you're willing to suffer it means you've made a real break with sin. It's kind of the same idea I think that Paul would bring when he says you've died to sin, now you're alive to God. Now, when he said you're dead to sin, he doesn't mean that sin no longer has any influence over you; it does. You have temptations and it has influence, but it's not your master anymore. You're not alive to it anymore; you're alive to God so you can really say no to sin. So in suffering, if we're willing to suffer under the will of God, it's evidence that we know God and we've made a break from our sin. I think that's the basic meaning of what he's trying to convey there.

And then, we see that being one to suffer in the flesh leads to something...it leads to a new lifestyle. Look in verse 2, “...so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God.” Here's where we see that choice you have to make. I love what William Barclay says. Peter has just been talking about baptism a few verses earlier, and Barclay says we have identified with Christ in baptism and what that means is the rule of pleasure, pride, and passion is gone and the new rule of God has begun in our life. That's that ceasing from sin. There is a new ruler in our life. No longer do passion, pride, and pleasure rule our life, but instead God does, God's will rules our life. So the application is choose to live under God's will rather than in your own human passions.

Now, let's just take those two phrases—human passions, and God's will. What we see in this text is those two are opposed to one another. You have a choice to make. You're either going to follow your human passions or you're going to live under the will of God, and those are distinct choices. Peter's saying you have to make a choice. In other words, you're either going to do whatever you want to do or you're going to do what God says. See, all of us have human passions. They're the things that we love, the things we long for, the things we desire, the things we want; those are

human passions. Some of those are good and some of those are not. The question is do you do whatever you want to do; whatever your heart says; whatever you long for; whatever you want to look at; whatever you want to scroll through? Is it okay and good to just go after that, or does God's will trump your will? Peter is trying to get Christians to choose not to just follow your heart. Don't just do whatever you want to do, instead follow the will of God because God's will is better than your desires. That's what he's trying to get this congregation to see.

So, why are some human passions contrary to God's will? I mean, wouldn't it make sense that if God made human beings, then what they want and desire would be acceptable to God? Let's make the question really basic. If God created your desires, then shouldn't whatever you desire be good and acceptable? Why in the world would something you desire in your heart that's going to lead you to happiness be contradictory to God's will? I mean, that doesn't make sense. God made you and you feel this way, then whatever you would want to do should be okay, acceptable and good. Well, we have to know the story of the Bible to be able to understand. This is why biblical theology is so important for us as Christians who are living in a world that is no longer ultimately sharing our worldview. So, how do we think through this? Well, you have creation...God made human beings. And He made us with desires, with longings, with passions, so God made human passions. That's creation, but that's not the end of the story and that's not the only story. There has been a great fall—our first parents chose self over God in the garden. They fell and sin entered the world, and sin has distorted many of our passions. We are image-bearers of God, but we're also broken. That means not everything we want now is good, right, and true. Often, what we want is not what we should want. So the reason why human passions and God's will are at odds with one another is because not only did God create us, but man has rebelled against God. So a lot of our desires and passions are now against our Creator, therefore human passions are now often pitted against God's will. See, passions, our human passions, were supposed to point us towards God, to love Him and worship Him, to love our neighbor as ourselves, and to live a life that is in accordance with how God created the universe, like they were good passions leading us to good places. But now because of the fall, they're

disoriented and we have a lot of passions that are broken and they're not leading us to God. They're leading us to build towers like in the Tower of Babel—to we make ourselves to be gods. We create our own realities and universe. We are now gods rather than our passions pointing us to God. In other words, our passions are pointing us inward rather than outward, and now we have broken human passions.

That's not the end of the story. There's a creation, there's a fall, but praise God, there is a rescue! This is why Jesus came. Jesus came because He knows our passions are broken and He actually lived a life completely under the will of God so He could die for our rebellion and so that we could receive His righteousness. We could receive His right and true life so that we could be forgiven of our rebellious passions, and we could be put in Him and receive a new life with new passions, with new rules, and now we love God more than we love ourselves.

But that's not even the end of the story. There's not only rescue there's also recreation. Christ is coming back and we're going to live in a world where our human passions will match perfectly to God's will. There'll be no more opposition and what we will want most will be what God says is best. That's what Heaven is going to be like. That's what the new Kingdom is going to be like. But right now, as Christians, we have the life of Christ in us, but we have a choice now. You can either live in your passions, or you can live in the will of God. Peter's trying to get this early church to choose the will of God over the passions of their own flesh. And for you, you have to make sure that in this moment you choose not just what you want but what God says, believing that what God says is better than what you want.

So, for those of us who are going to choose God's will, we have to break up with the past that pulls us back. Verse 3 says, "For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry." He is telling these Christians if you're going to choose God's will over human passions, then you have to break up with the past, the past that keeps pulling you back. See, Peter's not writing to conservative church kids; he's writing to ex-pagans. He's writing to people who are living throughout the Roman culture and who used to enjoy all the things of Roman culture.

Before the days of Christ, they were very colorful and exciting and now they've come to Christ...and Peter's trying to say all those things you used to do, you don't need to do those anymore because now you're in Christ. He's saying the girl you used to date, she was no good for you, and you know it. Now you have married another, you are married to Christ now and He is better, so don't go back to the old girlfriend, continue in your marriage with Christ. In other words, make a clear break with your past. It's the past that keeps pulling you back. Notice the words that he used, "For the time in the past *suffices* for doing what the Gentiles want to do..." That word, *suffices*, means it's enough. You've had your fill, you've had all the fun, and you've enjoyed it, but that time is over—you've had enough of it because that's what the Gentiles want to do.

Notice we have two phrases that are talking about humanity. The first was human passions, which are passions, desires, 'want-tos.' But what's a Gentile? Well, in biblical language, it is an unbeliever, a pagan. It's someone who doesn't know God, who who's not a believer in Christ. They have certain desires, they have certain want-tos, and he's writing to this church to say you used to want to do the very same things because at one time you also were apart from God. So what were those want-tos that the Gentiles wanted that Christians should no longer want to do? He lists them out. The first one is sensuality. That's self-abandonment, especially in a sexual manner. There are no rules, just giving ourselves over to just whatever feels good. So, there are passions, and these are not good passions they're forbidden passions. They are the things you should not do according to God's law, but this is what rules people who don't know God. Then there's drunkenness, which pretty obvious. He's saying you used to enjoy drunkenness, but stop getting drunk because now you have the Lord, now you have a different enjoyment. Then he goes to orgies, but we'll just stop there and go to drinking parties. These drinking parties would've been connected to worship to certain gods. They would go and have these drinking parties and it's going to be a lot of fun for everybody involved. There were all sorts of things that are happening there. And then, there's lawless idolatry. Now idolatry (worshiping a false god) seems bad enough but he adds an adjective to idolatry, "lawless." So it's not just idolatry, it's the really crazy kind of things that are even illegal that you



used to enjoy doing and participating in. They were living a life completely disconnected from God, completely doing whatever they wanted. This was what they did in their BC days, their before Christ's days. This is what their culture celebrated and they were all in. Peter's saying the time of the past is over; you have a new husband, you have a new life, and you now can live under God's will, not under your want-tos and your wayward passions. So what is he telling the church? Choose God's will.

So I just want to stop for a moment and I want you to think about in your own life, those BC passions that you used to have. We're all going to be different in our before Christ passions. This is not a moment to think about others, your neighbor, the person on TV, this is you as a Christian. We all had different human passions that were outside of God's will. In other words, we all struggled in different ways. He's writing to a church that did all sorts of things, and he says you can't do that anymore because now you're under Christ, you're under God's will not your want-tos. But I just want to ask to think for a moment, what were those for you? Not just what were those BC patterns you used to do, but what are the ones right now that still pull on you? What are the passions that you still have in your heart? What are the things you still long for that you know God says no to but you still like to enjoy them, you still to go back to them? What Peter's trying to say is make a break with them. The time in the past was sufficient; it's been enough. See, I think he's writing to a people that have been through all of those things. They know the pleasure, they know the power, they know the pull of all of those things, but they also know the emptiness of them. See, when you come to Christ you know the emptiness of your past sin, but it's that very sin that pulls you, that still lures you, that still entices you. He's saying remember the truth—it is a lie that doing whatever is in your heart will make you ultimately happy. Instead, seek to do what God has said, live under His will, because one left you empty and one leaves you satisfied. He's saying don't go back to the old ways; pursue Christ, pursue what you know to be right, good, and true.

I just want us to think through an application for you personally. What are those things from your past that you know Jesus had said no to, that you're still tempted with, that you still want to ease back into this morning?

Peter's calling you to repent of those things, to make a break with them, to see them as the bad relationship they were, and you have a new and better relationship, which is Jesus Christ? So right now, think through just a couple of those and determine it's time to be done with these. It's time to do away with these. It's time to walk away from these different things that once made you happy but are only adding misery to your life now because they're against the will of God. Think through those and apply those to your life.

In verse 4, we're going to see this idea of the righteous rebellion, which is what Peter's followers found themselves in. They are being righteous, but righteousness in their Roman culture is actually rebellion. Living God's morality is actually evil in the culture they find themselves in. Because they're doing right, they're called evil for doing what's right. Verse 4 says, "With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you..." He has just said don't do those things you used to love, those things that the Gentiles love to do. Then he gave a whole list of human passions without abandon, going after pleasure and excitement in all those ways. And then he says with respect to all of these things, the people you used to run with, the people you used to hang with, the people you used to enjoy some of those things with, are surprised now that you don't want to do the same things they're doing. They are surprised you don't want to come and do the same things. Why you don't party in the same ways and enjoy the same stuff. This is what used to make you happy, so why would you not enjoy these things anymore. They are shocked that you don't want to enjoy the flood of debauchery they're enjoying. To them, it's like all happiness and pleasure and why would you not want this.

But notice there's a shift that happens. There's a surprise and a shock, but the surprise quickly turns to hate. It's not just they're surprised and shocked, it's all of a sudden they begin to hate the very ones who won't participate in all the things that culture participating in. And then it says they malign you. So it goes from surprise—we can't believe you won't do this, we can't believe you don't think this is okay—then it switches to you are evil for not believing what we believe and not participating. Now, why

would the switch happen from being shocked and surprised to now maligning and going after the Christians who are living a different story in the culture of Rome? Well, it has to be because not only the Christians are not participating in the flood of debauchery of culture, but they're actually speaking into the culture, "You shouldn't either." That is where maligning comes from. If the Christian had just kept their mouth shut and stayed in their bubble, then culture probably wouldn't come after them and hate them. But when they speak up and say God has a way to live and you're not living in accordance with it and judgment is coming, then all of a sudden, the culture is not just shocked and surprised, the culture now hates the very ones who are trying to do what's right.

Is that the culture we find ourselves in today? Do we share a similar moment to that early Christian church? As Christians, when we say very biblical things that are straight from the Bible, like sex is meant for marriage only—to a broader culture it's a surprising and shocking thing that we would believe something as archaic as that. Not only that, but we believe that marriage is actually between one woman and one man for life. That is shocking...like how could we believe that? When we say things that the Bible would reveal and that nature would also reveal, just very general themes like men can't become women and women can't become men, there is surprise, there is shock.

Then notice how quickly it turns from surprise and shock to maligning. It's not just... *We can't believe you guys believe that!* It's... *You Christians are hateful, you Christians are violent, you Christians are the enemies!* See, this is what Peter and these Christians find themselves in. They are living out a biblical life, a biblical morality. It's first shocking to the culture but then it's considered hate to the culture for doing right. They are seen as the ones who are wrong. And I think what we've seen is we are living in the midst of a moral revolution in the sense of our own culture as well. Mohler has noted this, but I think it's Theo Hobson who actually says in a moral revolution the first thing that happens is what was universally condemned is now celebrated. So how does a moral revolution happen? What's universally condemned is all of a sudden universally celebrated, but not only that it goes a step further, what was universally celebrated is now

condemned. We can think of a whole lot of stuff of what has been universally condemned that is now celebrated. Think back twenty years ago about what was condemned then and is now celebrated. And there were things twenty years ago that were universally celebrated, like family and marriage and having kids, but it's now sort of flipped around to where those things are actually thought of as evil.

But then, there is a third step to a moral revolution—those who refuse to celebrate are condemned. That's where Peter's at, saying you're not celebrating, you're not enjoying, and it's actually bringing condemnation into your life. I think that's where we would find ourselves. As Christians, when we refuse to go along and celebrate with the revolution that's happening before our eyes, we too are now the ones who are condemned. It's why every June gets more colorful. It's why it's in commercials, at baseball games, it's why it's everywhere and everything, because it's not just we want legalization, that's what 2015 was about, we just want acknowledgement before the law. But then, it moves from just legalization to celebration. No, we have to celebrate that every lifestyle, that every choice, every human desire is equally good, right, and true, and we have to applaud everything. The moment you don't applaud, you're not celebrating; therefore, you have to be condemned. You are now the enemy; you are now the bad guy. That's where we find ourselves in this moment. We've seen a cultural revolution happen. What was once condemned is celebrated, what was once celebrated is now condemned, and the ones who don't celebrate are now the ones who are condemned.

I just want us to know right off the bat that we are not at a new moment. We are in a very old moment. We are in a very normal moment. This is New Testament Christianity. This is the way things have always been throughout all of church history. We are in a moment like so many other brothers and sisters have gone before us. So what do we do as we find ourselves in this moment? Well, we have to be willing to suffer for doing and saying what's right so that those who are doing and saying what's wrong might have hope that they won't suffer forever.

Now, why does that matter? Why can't we just get along and keep our mouths shut, or say that we don't really know what's true either, so we're

just going to agree to disagree? Why can we not take that position as Christians? It's because of the next verse; this is the reason we can't celebrate what the Bible condemns. Peter says in verse 5, "...but they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead." Why can we not just go along and celebrate? Because we know the story of the Bible. There's been a creation, there's been a fall, there's been a rescue, but there is also coming judgment. God is going to judge the world according to His Son Jesus Christ. He's going to judge the world in righteousness. We can't be the people who don't know what righteousness is, who don't know what truth is, who don't know what reality is. We have to be those people who stand up and stand in the way of people whom we love and care about, who are making choices that we know are against God's Word. Even when they malign us, they attack us, and they come after us as unloving, we must do the most loving thing, which is to live the truth and speak the truth in love so that as we suffer a little, they might not suffer for all eternity. This is the game changer—judgment is coming and judgment is real. If we don't believe that, then we just get along with our lives. If we do believe that, then we have an obligation to the people we cross paths with who are not living for God's will but are living in human passions. We have an obligation to stand in their way, even in suffering, and say I love you enough to love you to Christ. That's what we've have to be willing to do, and yes, that includes suffering. This is going to be a suffering moment for this church. When the culture doesn't love you for doing right, when the culture sees right as wrong and right as evil, you are going to suffer in that culture. So what do you do? You keep doing right even if it costs you suffering so that those who are doing wrong and living wrong might just hear the gospel and see there's a better way to live under God's law and under God's will. We have to be the people that are willing because judgment is coming.

Peter is going to speak to this idea of judgment because the early church had a problem, and the problem was the early believers had died. Now, this was a problem, seemingly, with the gospel, because if you listen to Jesus' message, He says you will never die. He says if you believe in me, you'll have eternal life, you'll pass through death. But the culture said... *You're telling us that if we believe in Christ, we won't die. Um, your*

*brother just died and he was a believer in Christ, but there's his tomb.* So that was a real problem for the early church. How did they address this? Well, Peter says this in verse 6, "For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does." So he is answering the question. He says I know Johnny's in the grave, but this is why we preached the gospel to him, because yes, he has been judged like all people will. In other words, he died because that's what sin brings but the grave is not the end of the story...he's actually right now alive with God and he's going to be alive with God forevermore so the grave is not the end.

What we have to do is be willing to stand up to a culture and say the grave is not the end—there is an end that still is to come, and in that end there is judgment, but there is One who has been judged for you. One suffered on a cross for you so that no matter what your human passions have led you to, there is grace and there is hope in the gospel. We do what Jesus did with the woman caught in adultery who had five different husbands. She was now living with a man who wasn't her husband. She lived a human passion type of life and all the religious leaders wanted to condemn her and throw rocks at her. But Jesus looked at her and said I don't condemn you. He gave her grace; He gave her mercy. Then He said to her, go and sin no more. In other words, He's not just accepting and celebrating her wayward lifestyle, He is forgiving it because of the cross, and He's saying now go live a different life, live under God's will rather than your human passions. We have to be able to speak to our friends and our loved ones and ourselves that there's a better way to living than just human passions, and it's under the will of God that's available through the cross of Christ. That's what we do in the culture we find ourselves in, in the moments we find ourselves in, with the friends that we find ourselves with.

So, what do we do to combat our culture? We live out a better love story. Notice what it says in verse 7, "The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers." Now, Peter wrote that 2000 years ago. He tells them the end is coming really quick, and we're reading this 2000 years later, so think about how much

closer we are to the end than Peter and his audience was. Therefore, because the end is near, be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. Don't live in human passions, be self-controlled, which by the way is a fruit of the Spirit. You have to have the Spirit to be self-controlled. You have to be in Christ through the gospel, in the cross, to be self-controlled. Also, we're going to be sober-minded instead of living in our passions and drunkenness, we are going to live a life for the glory of God under His will.

Then notice what we do, verses 8–9, "Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling." What's Peter saying? Church, you're living in a culture that is celebrating all sorts of sensuality and all these parties and all this rampancy—this is Roman culture. And Peter is saying to the church, you live out a better love story. You live out a love that's actually genuine, a love that is actually loving God, loving neighbor, and loving self in a proper way, which is living under the control of the Spirit. You, church, have a better love story is what Peter is saying. So practice hospitality, have people over, live a countercultural life. When the pagans are getting together, they're exploring all sorts of things together. You guys get together and just play volleyball and eat some meals. Do different stuff together that shows you're not just bodies, you are human beings made in the image of God and you celebrate one another more than just what your bodies are about.

Peter has given the church a different love story, a better love story, and that's what we have to do as the church in the culture we find ourselves in. In a culture that is living one narrative of what love is, we have to have a counter one that says this is what actually gospel, true, genuine, care for you, love you, lay down my life for you, have you over, and see you as an image-bearer of God full of value, dignity, and worth, no matter what you've done we all get forgiven at the cross of Christ. We have a bigger and better love story to show the culture that we're in. We're not condemning, we're not yelling; we are loving people relentlessly. We are loving people towards Jesus. And just to be honest, our love will often be seen as hate. And because of our love, we will suffer because we're doing

what's right and true under God. We're going with God's will versus human passions. So what do you do in that scenario? You keep suffering for doing good so that those who do wrong might not have to suffer for all eternity. Judgment is coming. Let's be the people who tell that, but also tell about the Lord Jesus who took judgment for all of us so that we'd be forgiven and have new life in Him. See, I think as a culture I don't know that we're living in Jerusalem anymore. It seems more and more that we're living in Babylon, but you know that's not new. That's how it was, and honestly, that's how it's always been, because Christians choose God over self and that's always against the general population. So what do we do? As Christians, we keep choosing God, we keep choosing right, even when we suffer for it because we're willing to suffer right now for a moment so that those we love and care about might not have to suffer for all eternity.