

How To Live In A World Of Suffering

1 Peter 4:7-11

Pastor John Miller

Let's read the entire passage, verse 7 down to verse 11 of 1 Peter 4. Peter says, "But the end of all things is at hand." That's the key phrase. "The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." Be sober minded for the purpose of prayer. "And above all things, have fervent love among yourselves: for love shall cover a multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. Every man has received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man..."—or any person—"...speak, let him speak as the oracles of God, and if any person minister, let him do it with the ability which God hath given him: that God may in all things be glorified through Jesus Christ, to Whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

The last couple of weeks we've watched with sadness as a lot of fires have broken out across California, and one of them in Devore area that I know so well. I grew up in that area. I'm so familiar with the fires that happen there. But when there's a fire like that, I'm always struck by the interview with those who have lost their homes and had only a short moment of time to run into their home to grab what is most important and to run out. I find myself sometimes rehearsing in my mind if the house were on fire, and I had to grab only certain things, what would I grab? I think, would I grab my surfboards, or would I grab the family pictures, you know. And I hope and pray that I would go to the pictures and some of the most important papers and let the surfboards go up in flames, because they're not that important.

But whenever there's a fire like that, there's two things that happen. There's a sense of urgency; we only have a few moments. You know, grab the children, get the family pets, and get the photos and get the important papers and let's get out of the house. The other furniture, the things, the house—they're not important, as long as we get out safely. So there's a sense of urgency, and there's a sense of priority. When there's a house burning, you don't go play croquet in the backyard. You don't watch your football game on TV. Something has to be done. It has to be done quickly, and you have to prioritize. I feel the same is true of us as believers; that we live in urgent times, but we're not urgent. That we need to make priorities of what is most important in life for the time we have remaining.

I want you to notice that Peter was writing to people, in verse 7, who were living at the time when "the end of all things" was at hand. That is a key phrase. Everything Peter tells us to do—but better yet, commands us to do—from verse 7 to the end of the chapter, is in light of this statement, "The end of all things is at hand." Well you say, "Wait a minute, Pastor John. Peter wrote that almost 2,000 years ago. How could the end of all things be at hand if 2,000 years have expired?" I believe, because 2,000 years have expired, the end of all things is at hand. How much closer are we than was Peter in his time.

Well, a little light on the Greek word "end" there. The word "end" there actually means "culmination." He's saying the culmination of all things is at hand. He's telling us that God's

culmination or consummation of His plan, of His purposes, of His prophetic calendar—theologians call it the “mega narrative,” God’s overarching purpose and plan for all things—is going to be culminated. It’s going to culminate in several events. The first is the Rapture of the church. Paul taught in 1 Thessalonians that “The Lord Himself would descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel,” 1 Thessalonians 4. And he said, “The dead in Christ shall rise first, and we who are alive and remain...”—which would be an awesome thing —“...should be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so will we forever be with the Lord.” Amen? We’re looking for that moment. And I believe the Rapture is imminent, meaning nothing has to happen before the Lord returns for His church.

And then it follows with seven years of Tribulation. And then the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, which all Scripture is looking toward. We have the first coming of Christ, which, by the way, is the beginning of the end of time in God’s complete picture; and then the Second Coming of Christ, or advent of Christ, which is the culmination of time; and then the 1,000-year millennial reign of Christ; and then they’ll be a new heaven and a new earth, that eternal state. So we’re living in the end of time when “the end of all things,” or the culmination or consummation of all things, will happen.

So what he’s telling us in these verses is in light of the end of times, in light of their persecution, in light of their suffering, in light of their adversity, in light of the fact that before the Lord returns, the world will get very hostile and very, very dark. And they were going through—and we’re going to see it next Sunday—verse 12, a “fiery trial,” which is to try them.

So they had to have a sense of urgency, and they had to establish priorities, as we today need to do the same. We only have a short time left, and we need to establish priorities. Have you ever gone into a store to go shopping, and then you found out they were going to close in 15 minutes and you had a bunch of stuff to buy? It’s kind of a panic, you know. They’re turning off the lights and asking people to leave, and you’re hiding behind things, you know. Grabbing stuff and you’re trying to get things bought before you leave.

I’ll never forget, years ago, how the one and only time I got to spend a day—it was really only a half a day—in London, England. I was on my way to Scotland, and we stopped over in London and I had about six hours in London. But it was late in the afternoon, and we had very little time, so we ran to—priority for me—the British Museum. I don’t know if you’ve ever been to the British Museum, but it’s just layers and layers of all the treasures in the world. And it was so amazing. So here I am. I get to go into the British Museum, and we walk in and find out that they’re going to close in 30 minutes. So I had to prioritize really quickly. And prioritize for me was to make a right turn and to go into what is called the library area where the treasured books of all the world are stored—and all old, ancient translations of the Bible are stored—in the library there in the British Museum. But I had only about 30 minutes to look at it all, and then we had to be headed out the door.

And I thought about the urgency and priority. And that’s what we should feel about our lives. You only have a short window, a short time. The night comes when no one can work. The day

is at hand. Let us cast off the works of darkness. Let's put on the armor of light. What are the things we should make a priority in our lives? What should we be doing with our time?

Peter answers those questions in our text with five commands for us in light of "the end of all things" being at hand. If you're taking notes, you can write them down. Five commands or imperatives that we should put into practice. Number one, in light of the end of time, we should be sober. Notice it in verse 7. "Be ye therefore sober." Now notice the "therefore," and we ask what is it there for. The "therefore" is there because of "the end of all things." "The end of all things is at hand." And the Lord is coming soon, so the most important priority is that we have a clear mind.

The words "be sober" were used for a person who was right in his mind. It means to be self controlled or balanced in your reactions. Some translations actually have "self controlled." I love William Barkley's rendering of "preserving your sanity" in the context of the end times, noting that in the end of time when things go crazy, don't panic, don't freak out. Some paraphrase this "Keep your head cool." So we keep our mind cool. Don't panic. Don't freak out. Now in the context, again, of the end of times.

This is an area in which a lot of people get imbalanced. They get whacko. They sell everything they have, move to Montana, think that they're going to survive the Tribulation. I remember when we were headed toward the year 2000, everybody sold stuff and moved away, thought the world was going to end. And it's like, "No. Stay calm. Be sober." My translation could be "Don't be stupid." Why, I do not know, but Christians are often so flat-out stupid. They just do stupid stuff. "The Lord's coming back! You know, the world's going to end!" And they just start freaking out. Calm down. Cool your jets. God is on the throne. Amen? God is in control. And we may be panicking when we think of this coming election. (I'll just stop right there.) And we're freaking out. I'm freaking out. I'm like, "Oh, Lord." But you know what? God is still on the throne; right? Amen? No matter who ends up in the White House, we know that God is still sitting on that "great white throne" in heaven. Amen? And He reigns from the heavens. And God is in control. So keep your cool. Be sober. Don't panic but rather pray.

And this is the second point. Write this down. Watch, verse 7, and pray. Now the truth is that verse 7 is really one statement. "The end of all times is at hand; be therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." "Sober...watch unto prayer" is really one command in the Greek. And he's actually telling us to be alert or to be watchful for the purpose of—for the sake of praying. Don't be drunk on the philosophies and the values of and the ideas of the world. A lot of Christians have their mind shaped and influenced by the world rather than by the Word of God. Christians need to think Biblically. We need to look at all the world through the lens of Scripture. There's nothing more important for you as a Christian than to view all of life through the lens of Scripture. What does God's Word say about my life? About marriage? About children? About work? About church? About life? About death? Everything needs to be viewed through the lens of Scripture. So we need to think clearly, but it needs to motivate us to pray.

And Peter knew well the mistake that can take place when he was in the Garden of

Gethsemane. It's interesting that Peter tells us to stay awake and pray. He's the one who fell asleep in the Garden. Jesus actually said, "Peter, James and John. Watch with Me. Stay awake. Pray with Me." And then He went a little further in the Garden and He prayed and He came back. What were they doing? Sleeping. They had the gift of sleep.

Did you ever find out when you kneel next to your bed—and you get down and you kneel and you fold your hands, you put your head down, it forms just a perfect little cup right there for your forehead? And you're elevated just enough off the bed that you can still breathe. It's comfortable and you start to pray, "Lord, I just come before...[yawning] right now, Lord, and I just pray...ah." You wake up an hour later, and there's a big red spot on your forehead. It's like, "Wow. Sorry, Jesus. I'll catch you tomorrow." And you fall asleep. Why is it that we're so eager to sleep instead of awake and praying? But he's speaking here of spiritually vigilant, of staying awake and watching and praying.

How should we pray when we face a hostile world? Well again, Peter, having learned his lesson in the Garden of Gethsemane, prayed in Acts 4 with the other believers after being persecuted and told no longer to preach in the name of Jesus, they ran back to their church fellowship meeting in a home and they prayed. And their prayer had three points. Number one, they prayed, "Lord, You are God. You made the heavens and the earth and all things and that You're in control." So here's how you pray when you're facing a hostile world. You pray, "God, You're still on the throne. You are still in control."

And then they turned from the sovereignty of God to the Scriptures. "By the mouth of Thy servant, David, said..." And they started praying the Scriptures. And that God was in control in His prophetic plan.

And then, thirdly, they prayed for boldness. "Give us boldness to speak Your Word." So instead of cowering, instead of running, they prayed, and they prayed for boldness. "God, give us more strength to do preaching," which is why God is in trouble the first time. Instead of praying, "Lord, I just pray they won't hurt us. Lord, I just pray You'll protect us." "Lord, just give us strength. Give us boldness to go out and to preach Your Word." So Jesus is coming, "the end of all things is at hand," don't fall asleep, be clear minded, alert and prayerful. Some translations have "be serious about your prayer life."

Here's the third thing you need to do. Again, it's a command. Have fervent love. Notice it in verse 8. "Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sin." Now I'm reading that from the NASB. "Above all, keep fervent in your love..."—which is agape love—"...for love covers a multitude of sin." As the world gets more hostile toward Christians, we need the love and fellowship of other believers. Now it's important as a Christian that you get involved in a church. And in a church like Revival, it's important that you get involved in a small group. That you get involved in a women's study, in a men's study, marriage study, that you get involved in a life group or dinner fellowship. It's a great way to meet other people one night a month for four months. You just go out and have dinner and fellowship and get to know other people. A lot of great relationships have been established in our church just

from dinner fellowship. With a little bit of commitment, you can meet other people.

But now Peter moves to the context of loving each other in the church. And the darker the world gets, the more hostile the world gets, we need the love of the fellowship body of Christ. There's one thing we should make a priority in the church. It's Christian love one for another. And this is seen, verse 8, in the phrase "above all." Or in the King James translation, "above all things." "Above all" or "above all things." Why does he use that phrase? He's using that phrase to say that love is to be paramount. Love is to be priority. Love is to be the first thing. Read 1 Corinthians 13. "If I have not love, I am nothing." "If I can speak of the tongue of men and of angels, but if I have not love, I'm just a sounding brass or a cymbal." "I can give my body to be burned, I can feed the poor, but if I have not love, I am nothing." And Jesus said, "By this..."—that is, your love for one another as Christians—"...the world will know that you are My..."—what?—"...disciples." Not by your bumper stickers. Not by your haircut. Not by your Christian clothes. But by your love. You can have the haircut, the clothes, the attire, all those things in the church, but if we don't have love, then we can't claim to be children of God. How can we say we're born of God if we don't love one another? There's one prayer that I have for this church, and that's we grow in love for God and for each other. It's so important. Yes, we need to be theologically sound and orthodox in what we believe, but what we believe will determine how we behave.

And Peter, being very practical as well as theological, starts off doctrinal—"the end of all things is at hand, therefore be sober minded, watch and pray"—therefore you need to have fervent love one for another above everything else.

Now what does the word "fervent" mean? How are we to love each other? The word "fervent" pictures an athlete straining to reach a goal. We recently watched the Olympics, and I was fascinated by the field and track and those guys who are called "the fastest humans in the world" when they run that 100 meter dash. Those guys are booking! They are like [making a whooshing sound]. Sometimes I think in my mind, what would happen if I tried to race one of these dudes. I would be just lifting up off the starting block going, "Aw, forget it." They'd be crossing the line. I'd be like, "Why even run?" [Whooshing sound.] They'd already be on the finish line. But you ever notice that when they run that 100 meter dash, they strain and they reach out and they're givin' it all they got and they lean forward to cross that line, so much so that sometimes they take a tumble and fall? That's what this word "fervent" in love means. It means we give it all we've got.

How many Christians work hard or strain? The word is "agonizo." It means to agonize to love other people. Very few. If someone offends you, you go to another church. And if you go to another church, someone will offend you there, and you'll have to go to another church. And someone will offend you there, and you'll have to go to another church. And you never stay and learn to grow in love and forgive other people. It's like a family; right? You don't just run away from your family when you offend each other or hurt each other. You learn to forgive. It's like a marriage. You have to work at it. You have to agonize. I don't know any couples that have been married for any length of time that haven't given it a little [straining]. "Gonna make this

work.” You have to agonize. And we need to learn to love one another fervently. It is sometimes hard work.

Now why, verse 8, should we have fervent love one for another in the Christian community? He tells us, verse 8, because, or for, “love covers a multitude of sins.” So there’s the reason in the text. He gives us the rationale. Why should we in the church have fervent love? Not only so the world will know we are His disciples, but “love covers a multitude of sins.” And, by the way, he’s quoting from Proverbs 10:12, which says, “Hatred stirreth up strifes, but love covers all sins.” Now what does Peter mean when he quotes Proverb; “love covers all sins.” Let me tell you what he doesn’t mean. He doesn’t mean that love is blind to sin or that love condones sin. “Oh, I love you. It’s okay. You can do that. Oh, I love you. It’s fine.” Love doesn’t condone sin or approve of sin. Love is discerning. Love is pure. What I think he means in the context here, “Love covers a multitude of sins,” is that he means love is willing and ready and eager to forgive and forget the sins that people commit against us.

How do I cover your sin? I’ll tell you how I cover your sin and you cover mine. When I sin against you or you sin against me, I forgive you. And then I go on to treat you like it never happened. One of the most misunderstood terms in all the Bible is to forget. God forgets our sins. You know what it means when God forgets our sins? It means He treats us like it didn’t happen. God doesn’t mentally forget it. He knows all things; He is omniscient. And many times I’ll hear people say, “Well, I’ll forgive you, but I won’t forget.” Or “I forgave them, but I’ve never forgotten.” It doesn’t mean that you have some kind of mental erase of your mind and you forget. You still remember what they did, but you don’t treat them like they sinned against you. That’s what it means to forgive and to forget. That’s what love does: it covers sin. You offend me, I offend you, but we learn to forgive one another. This is why the Bible says, “Be kind, be tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ’s sake, has forgiven you.” There’s two things a Christian needs to be: loving and forgiving. And we need to come to the cross to be forgiven. Then we need to stay at the cross to be forgiving. Do you remember what God has forgiven us of? How can we not forgive others who have sinned against us?

So, keep a cool head and pray, keep a warm heart and love fervently, then I want you to notice, fourthly, open your home. Use hospitality. Verse 9, “Use hospitality one to another...” And I think it’s interesting that Peter threw in that term “...without grudging.” Nothing worse than a grudging hostess. Don’t invite people over for dinner if you’re afraid they’re going to eat too much. Ever go to eat at somebody’s house, and it’s really good? And you go, “Man, I’d really like to eat some more.” And you like just grab it or do I wait or do they ask me if I want more? What do you do? Can you imagine being at someone’s house for dinner, and you kind of help yourself to some more, and they go, “Wow, we won’t get seconds out of that!” Like, throw it back in the pot, you know. Don’t be a grudging host.

Now you talk about practical in the last days. Again, this is being commanded in light of “the end of all things is at hand.” Open your hearts and open your homes. In Peter’s day, hospitality was so very important. There were traveling evangelists, and they needed places to stay. And the Christians met in homes. They needed a church to meet in; open your home. But it’s also

important in our day. I believe as a church that if we love one another that we will reach out to one another. You know, there are people in our church, for which I thank God, that find visitors and find newcomers, introduce themselves, and say, "Would you like to come to our house for a meal or would you like to get together with us?" They reach out to some other people. What a blessed thing that is. Open your home.

Now the word "hospitality" in the Greek literally means "loving strangers." So if you think, "Hey, I can do that. I'll invite my friends over. I'll invite my good buddies over, family over. We're hospitable." No. The word "hospitality" literally means "loving strangers." You go, "I don't do strangers." The Bible says in Hebrews 13, "Don't forget to entertain strangers." You know why? "Because some have entertained angels unaware." I wondered why his coat was sticking up over those wings. That dude was an angel! Abraham opened his tent and invited three strangers in, and guess who one of them was? Jesus. You never know who that stranger might be who might bring blessing into your home. Invite a stranger. Invite the pastor. Who knows?

I shared it first service. It was kind of funny. The day I was babysitting my son's '68 VW bus, and it's all beat up and thrashed, and I'm trying to fix it up a little bit for him. He's gone for a couple of years. And I was driving it to a repair shop the other day, and I broke down. And I sat in this VW bus out Scott Road going down to Bundy Canyon. I sat out there on the road, you know, for a couple of hours. And I actually saw some of the folks from church drive by. It's like [calling after them]. I had a hat on, I hadn't shaved, I had grubby clothes on, you know. "Don't look. Don't look. There's a hobo right there." And it's like—I mean, and I called AAA. They were really late getting there, so I sat in the heat for a couple of hours. I thought, "Man, all these church people drove past." It's like, "Help! Help! It's Pastor John!" Step on the gas [vroom]. "Creepy looking dude." You never know; that hobo may be your pastor.

I was actually getting gas in it before I broke down, and someone from the church was right next to me. I said, "Hi, how you doin'?" They go [walking away and ignoring him]. I had to go right over to them, took my hat off, "Hey, it's Pastor Miller." "Oh, hey, hi." They didn't even recognize me. It may be the pastor. It may be an angel. You don't ever know. So open your heart. Open your home. Use hospitality.

Now I want you to see lastly, and fifthly. Here's the last command. Use your gifts, verses 10 and 11. Peter gets very, very practical. Notice in verse 10. "As every man..."—the idea is "person"—"...has received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any person speak, let him speak as the oracles of God..."—verse 11—"...if any man minister..."—or serve—"...let them do it with the ability which God gives, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to Whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever." So the last thing Peter tells us in light of "the end of all things being at hand" and the hostility of the world around us is, "Take your gifts, in light of the urgency and the priority, and use them."

Now I want to point out some facts about spiritual gifts—if you're taking notes, write them down—drawn from this passage. Notice, first of all, that every Christian has received at least one

gift. That's seen in verse 10. "As every man..."—or person—"...has received the gift," the charisma. So every Christian, the Bible makes clear, has received at least one gift of the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:7 says that the Spirit divides severally to everyone as He chooses or as He wills. So it's a sovereign gift of the Spirit to every Christian.

Secondly, it's to be used for others. Notice what he says in verse 10. "Even so minister the same one to another." If God has given you a gift, it's not for you to show off. It's not for you to profit by. It's not jewelry to show off. It's not toys to fight over. They're tools to build with, and you must use them to build up others.

And then notice, thirdly, we are to be "good stewards," verse 10. I love this concept of "good stewards of the manifold grace of God." Now we don't think of stewardship so much today, but in the ancient world, a wealthy landowner would have an entrusted slave who he would give his money to, his wealth to, other servants to, and he would basically run the whole show. He'd be like the right-hand man. He didn't own anything, but he controlled everything. He was an entrusted servant. But he would one day have to give an account to his master for the job he was doing with his master's goods. So the concept is clear: God has entrusted to you and I gifts, and we're to use them for the good of others and for the glory of God. One day we're going to give an account to God of how we used those gifts. We're not to just wrap them in a napkin and bury them in the ground, to use a parable that Jesus gave. But we're to use them for the profit of others and the benefit of others and the glory of God.

I want you to stop and think for a moment. There's coming a day when you will stand before Jesus as a Christian. Not to be judged for your sin, but you will be judged for your service. Every one of us. We will be judged for our service. What did you do with your time? What did you do with your talents? What did you do with your treasure? One of them might be your home. Did you open it up to other people? Did you give them a place to stay in time of need? Did you feed people? Help people? Did you use your money and your time to serve other people? What talents or gifts has God given to you?

Now I want you to notice also, fourthly, in verse 10 that these gifts are grace gifts. "The manifold grace of God." In verse 10, the word "gift" is "charis." And from the same word "charis" we get our word "grace..."—in verse 10—"...of God." And it's "the manifold grace of God," which means "many colored." The gifts of God are given by His grace. If you see somebody who was really gifted by God and given a spiritual gift, it's not because they deserved it. It's not because they earned it. It's not because they're special. It's because God is a god of grace. They're grace endowments, these gifts from God.

Now there are many, fifthly, different kinds of gifts. And we read about them in Romans 12, in 1 Corinthians 12, in Ephesians 4 and 1 Peter 4. If I were to summarize the main places in the New Testament that speak about the gifts of the Spirit, it would be Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4 and 1 Peter 4. Now here, in verse 11, Peter mentions two categories of gifts: speaking and serving. Look at it with me, verse 11. He says, "If any man speak, let him..."—or her—"...speak as the oracles of God;..."—that's the speaking gift. And then in verse 11, the

serving gift—“...if any man minister...”—or serve—“...let him do it as to the ability which God gives” them. So there are speaking gifts. Maybe it's preaching, maybe it's teaching, maybe it's a word of wisdom, a word of knowledge. Maybe it's a word of comfort or exhortation or encouragement. But if you speak, speak as God's mouthpiece. Share the Scriptures with them.

You know, I believe that when the Bible speaks, God speaks. And I believe the Scripture's given by inspiration of God, which literally means “God breathed.” That's why when we read Scripture, we're actually hearing God speak. And God speaks today through what He spoke so long ago in the Scriptures. So when you memorize the Bible and you quote Scripture, you are actually speaking as an oracle of God. When you share God's Word with individuals, you are speaking as God's mouthpiece, the very voice of God.

And then, if you're a servant. You say, “Well, I'm not a preacher. I'm not a teacher. I don't do counseling. I don't have a speaking gift.” Well maybe your gift is in the area of service or ministry. Do you know there is a gift of hospitality? That some people are given a gift of hospitality? Some people are given the gift of helps. Some people are given the gift of service. Some people are given the gift of showing mercy. Those are gifts of the Holy Spirit.

How do we exercise them? Verse 11 says, do it with “the ability which God gives.” I believe with all my heart that when God gives you a gift, that God gives you the ability to exercise that gift. And what God calls us to do, God then enables us to do. I've had people come to me and say, “God's called me to sing.” “Really.” “Yah, God's called me to sing.” “Sing something for me.” [Singing off key.] “God has not called you to sing. Please, please do not sing. That is not your gift.” “Well, yes it is! And I don't believe you.” “God have mercy on you. And on us because we have to listen to you!” If God calls you to sing, He gives you a voice; okay? If God calls you to show mercy, He gives you a heart of mercy. If God's given you the gift of hospitality, He gives you a love for strangers and for strange people. And you'll open your heart, you'll open your home. God gives you that ability, and it's such an awesome thing. Now it can be nurtured and developed as it's exercised and we can hone our gifts. But the glory goes to God because they're grace gifts. And He enables us to exercise them.

And notice last but not least, sixthly, in verse 11. The gifts of the Spirit are to be used to glorify God. Notice in verse 11, “that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to Whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” Verse 11 is a doxology. He closes the verse with this doxology; that God, Who made all things, may be glorified through Jesus Christ. This is the one point of all these points on the gifts of the Spirit that really excites me. And that one point is that everything that God entrusts to us and that we use in His power for the good of others is all to be for His glory.

Too many churches are fighting over the gifts of the Spirit. It's carnal. It's worldly. If God has entrusted you with a gift, time is short. “The end of all things is at hand.” Prioritize your time. Find your gift and use it in love for the good of others and the glory of God. Don't waste another day. You say, “Well, I don't believe the Lord is coming soon.” But he may come for you today. He may come for you tomorrow. I just thought I'd encourage you. You may die in your

sleep tonight. God bless you. May you have a great week. But it's true. No one knows.

Have you ever had a close encounter with death? You ever said, "I should have died. I could have been killed. One inch more and we would have all been dead"? How many of us can tell stories like that? You don't know. You weren't expecting that. "The end of all things" may be at hand for you. You don't know how much time you have.

Have a cool head, a warm heart, open your home in love, have a fervent heart of love one for another and have a hand that reaches out, using hospitality in love for the glory of God. Amen?