

## UNSHAKABLE: An Unshakable Mind<sup>i</sup> 1 Peter 4:1-11

### INTRODUCTION:

Good morning, church family. I want to welcome those of you that are guests with us today. Thank you for entrusting us with your Sunday. It is our prayer that our church already feels like home for you.

We would love the opportunity to connect with you. You can help us do that in one of two ways. You can text the keyword, TBCMP, which stands for Trinity Baptist Church Mt. Pleasant, to the number 94-000. When you text that keyword to that number, you'll be sent a link back that will take you to a form to enter basic contact information. When you submit that form, it notifies me and I look forward to following up with our guests.

If texting isn't your preference, I certainly understand that. You can stop by our information center located in the lobby, under the banner that says, "Hope is Here." There we have a team that would like to meet you and give you a gift as a way of saying thank you for being with us this morning.

### SERIES OVERVIEW:

I want to invite you to grab your Bibles and turn with me to 1 Peter, chapter 4. We're in a teaching series we've called Unshakable, working our way through the New Testament book of 1 Peter.

I want to encourage you, if you have missed any of our series, to go back and listen to those messages. You can do that on our church website at [trinitytx.org/sermons](http://trinitytx.org/sermons) or you can subscribe to our podcast, Hope for the Broken, on any platform that you listen to podcasts.

But today we are looking at the subject of an unshakable mind as we work our way through 1 Peter, chapter 4, verses 1 through 11.

### **OPENING ILLUSTRATION: Brazil Trip**

I love that we have two teams on mission today. We have a team serving with our missionaries, Paul and Kay Newby in Honduras, and we have a team in Guatemala serving alongside Terry and Tiffany McConnell and the Eagle's Nest children's home. I want to encourage you to continue to pray for those teams.

Being a part of a mission team is a ton of fun. I've been privileged to go to some cool places. When I was in seminary, I went with a team to Brazil where we served along missionaries doing ministry in small villages along the Amazon River. To say that I was out of my comfort zone would be an understatement, being on the Amazon River. But it was an awesome trip.

We had a team that examined people's teeth, a team that did VBS, a team that fit people with eyeglasses, and I was on the evangelism team. Basically, what I did was bring a soccer ball and kick it around with guys in each village, because no matter how small the community was, they had a soccer field. I mean, Brazil is known for their success in soccer. So, I would kick the ball around the drum up interest.

On one occasion, I was able to spark a game between the visiting Americans and the local Brazilians. I had to go back to our boat and tell our team that they were voluntold to play in this game the next day.

Well, we show up and we have our shorts, shirts, shoes, and new soccer balls. The Brazilians show up in whatever clothes they had, jeans, barefoot, maybe a shirt, etc. We, Americans, may have looked the part, but it didn't take long for everyone to see that we didn't belong on the soccer field with those guys. We got destroyed! When it came to soccer, we could not fit in. It was amazing.

In our passage this morning, Peter tells us that as believers we are to be different than the culture around us. That it should be obvious that we stand out from the rest of the world. And he's going to say that we need to prepare our minds, our attitudes, as we navigate being different and all that comes along with that. We are going to see that an unshakable mind is armed, is wise, and considers eternity. That will be our outline this morning.

### MESSAGE:

Let's begin by looking at how an unshakable mind...

#### **1) Is armed.**

We have to arm our minds. Look with me at verse 1 of 1 Peter 4. ***1**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.* A couple things that I want to point out here.

The word translated, “arm,” is a military word. It literally means to make ready or to equip with weapons.<sup>ii</sup> An unshakable Christian mind is one that has been equipped and made ready. Like the life of a soldier, this kind of preparation comes by way of discipline and grit.<sup>iii</sup> So, we are to arm our minds. But for what?

Peter opens this verse by saying that since Christ suffered, believers should prepare themselves to potentially have to suffer as well. We arm ourselves with the same thinking, or the same attitude, of our Lord. Jesus knew what was coming for Him, yet He armed His mind to endure for the sake of His mission, the redemption of humanity.

#### **ILLUSTRATION: Yogi Berra**

The great baseball legend, Yogi Berra, was known, not only for his success on the field, but also for his memorable quips. One of his most famous sayings is, “Baseball is 90% mental. The other half is physical.” John Madden popularized that saying when he said, “90 percent of the game is half mental.”<sup>iv</sup>

I can remember playing baseball in high school and my Dad being in the stands watching. When I would struggle on the mound, which was often, I could hear my Dad in my mind. He would tell me all the time, “Get your mind right, Chris.”

This is essentially what Peter is telling believers. Get your mind right. Prepare your mind for what is possible. Take on the attitude of Jesus and be ready to face whatever may come our way. It is, Afterall, a part of the cost that Jesus asks us to count when following Him.

Now, we can't just leave this verse here because the second half of the verse kinda opens a can of worms. Peter says, “*for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.*” What are we to make of this?

Well, I think Peter is saying is that a people who have prepared themselves for potential suffering for their faith is a people that have made a commitment to pursue a life of holiness. Why else would you be persecuted for your faith?

The point is NOT that believers who suffer for their faith no longer sin.<sup>v</sup> That's an impossibility this side of Heaven. But those that are ready for persecution, are those that have drawn a line in the sand as to what they will and will not participate in. That's a mind that's armed. Secondly, an unshakable mind...

## 2) Is mature.

Peter builds on the first verse here as he develops this idea of being a mature Christian. Look at verses 2 through 4. *<sup>2</sup>so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. <sup>3</sup>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. <sup>4</sup>With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you.*

Peter is saying, the Christian with an unshakable mind has not only armed their mind, but they've matured in their faith. He says, “The time that is past suffices.” In other words, enough. It's time to grow up. It's time to move past the old habits, childish ways, and sinful activity of non-believers. I think if Peter was talking to us today, he'd say, “Bro. You're in your 30s! Hello!”

There are those that never grow up. Have you noticed that? They are still trying to hold onto their immature days. Peter says that immature non-believers live in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties and lawless idolatry. Now, I'm not trying to be an old, mad at the world, preacher here. But the believer in Jesus should have matured, moved past those days and instead, they pursue holiness.

Wouldn't we think it very strange if we walked into the grocery store and saw this. **Show graphic**. Well, nowadays, maybe we wouldn't. But Peter says that it is actually backward. The reality is that mature believers are the ones that look strange in a culture that pursues self-indulgences. He says in verse 4, “*<sup>4</sup>With respect to this they are surprised [literally translated, “they think it strange,” or “they're entertained by you”<sup>vi</sup>] when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery.* Peter's saying that when you seek to live a life that honors God, you're a freak show, a circus clown, in the eyes of the world.

He goes further and says, beyond thinking you are strange, “*they malign you.*” Literally translated, they blaspheme you, they use abusive language against you, they speak evil of you and defame you.<sup>vii</sup> We are often socially ostracized.

Think about the original audience. These early believers used to participate in the sinful acts Peter listed. But now, they have abandoned those things in pursuit of Christ. So, their old friends continued, and they are thrown for a loop. So, they say, “Better not invite them anymore.” So, they're ostracized.

### ILLUSTRATION: Golf Course

I don't play golf much anymore, but when I did, I usually played with my buddy, Troy. Troy is an avid golfer and I just play at the sport. But one time we were paired with 2 other dudes. These guys were drinking and cussing and throwing clubs and carrying on. I'm not judging, just setting the scene for you. And about the 5<sup>th</sup> hole the conversation finally came up, "So, what do you guys do?" LOL. I looked at Troy and just said, "We're pastors." To which those guys said, in unison, "Holy bleep!" When we went in to grab water at the turn, those guys left the course, they took off.

Now, they didn't defame us or speak evil of us, but it appeared that they couldn't handle spending the rest of the day with us. It was a weird deal because we were having a blast. But that's the way it goes.

But notice the motivation that Peter adds for developing a mature mind. Verses 5 and 6. *<sup>5</sup>but **they will give account** to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. <sup>6</sup>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.* Two motivations for getting our minds right and having a mature mind.

First, an account will be given for what is done in our lives. We all have been issued a subpoena. We will appear on the day we die and stand before the true judge. That judgment will go well for the one that has matured in faith. But it will not go well for the ones that live in self-indulgence.

Now, I don't believe Peter is mentioning this to strike fear in our hearts. The point is not that we are to worry about being condemned by God.<sup>viii</sup> That's been settled at the cross if you are in Christ. But we do have to realize that God is a righteous God, and we should operate in reverent respect of His judgment.

But also remember, Peter is talking to believers that have fled persecution. By mentioning the judgment that is awaiting, He's reminding them, and us, that vindication for the believer is not in this lifetime, but the next. There's a comfort in knowing that we don't face meaningless persecution that will just be overlooked. No, there is a God that sees, and our reward is in Heaven.

Secondly, in verse 6, there is more confusing language. The gospel was preached even to those who are dead? What does he mean here? There are a

few different views here, but I think this is in reference to the Christians who heard the gospel while alive and are now dead, perhaps the result of martyrdom.<sup>ix</sup> The gospel has become very real to our brothers and sisters who have gone onto glory. But also, the gospel comes to fruition when the dead in Christ rise again in the last days.

And the truth of this teaching provided the motivation for believers to have armed and mature minds. Thirdly, an unshakable mind...

### 3) Considers eternity.

In other words, a mind that is unshakable isn't focused on the here and now, but rather ponders the weight of eternity. In particular, Peter mentions 4 things that help us focus our minds on eternity. First, an eternally focused mind...

#### A) Prays.

Look at verse 7 of 1 Peter 4. *<sup>7</sup>The end of all things is at hand; [you can sense the eternal focus and urgency in that statement] **therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.***

You and I can tell that we have an eternal focus by the depth of our prayer lives. If eternity doesn't matter, then why pray? Oh, but it does matter, and therefore our prayer life matters. Prayer is the lifeline for the believer, the direct line of communication with God The Father. Prayer also keeps us mentally and spiritually alert.<sup>x</sup> Holding in view the immanent return of Jesus will energize our prayer life. The mind focused on eternity prays. Secondly, it...

#### B) Loves.

When facing potential persecution, it changes the way we relate to one another. Look at verse 8. *<sup>8</sup>Above all, keep **loving one another earnestly**, since love covers a multitude of sins.*

When a church is facing persecution, it strengthens the love they have for one another. When you are not going to receive love from a world that maligns you, you are going to need it from your fellow brothers and sisters. And notice that it covers a multitude of sin, that is sins and offenses are easier to deal with.<sup>xi</sup> We will offend one another, but when there is mutual love, it is dealt with positively.

### ILLUSTRATION: Littlefield

We have seen this truth played out in our family. Not to bore you with the details, but when Cathy and I lived in Littlefield, our first ministry assignment, one of our family members was involved in an accident that was very stressful. There we were, in the middle of nowhere, 8 hours away from family, reeling from this situation that we didn't know the outcome. But Cathy and I, and little baby Carsyn, we had to come together and support one another. We look back on that time and say that those were the days when Team Wigley was forged. Our love for one another deepened as we supported one another. Trials a way of doing that, don't they?

That's what Peter is saying. You need one another now more than ever before. In addition to praying, love one another deeply. Thirdly, an eternally focused mind is...

### C) Hospitable.

This is what Peter says in verse 9. ***“Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.”*** The word translated “hospitality” is a word that literally means “fond of guests.”<sup>xii</sup> Hospitality is one of the marks of Christian community. In fact, it was the very vehicle that caused the rapid growth of the church.

But we are becoming an increasingly isolated people. Texting, social media, technology, schedules, and gaming consoles have contributed to living in more isolation than ever before.

### **ILLUSTRATION: The Atlantic Article**<sup>xiii</sup>

An article I read this week put out by The Atlantic, said that technology has made making connections easier, but life has become more isolated.

I love the Bible because of its transparency. Peter goes on to say, show hospitality, but do so without grumbling. In other words, it can be tiresome to be hospitable. Some people have the gift and its easy for them. But for others, it's a challenge. But it is vital.

So, an eternally focused mind prays, loves, and is hospitable. Finally, it...

### D) Uses gifts.

Verses 10 and 11 says, ***“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: <sup>11</sup>whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the***

***strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”***

The New Testament often teaches that when the Holy Spirit indwells the believer at the moment of salvation, He brings with Him spiritual gifts. We are to use our gifts. But notice Peter's instruction about using your gifts. To serve one another. Beloved, you are gifted. But your gift is not for you. It's for The Church.

Peter does not give an exhaustive list of spiritual gifts.<sup>xiv</sup> But basically, he gives two categories; teaching and serving. He says if you've been gifted to teach, you better teach. The church is dependent on you exercising your gift. If you gift is a serving gift, then you better be serving the church in some capacity.

An unshakable church is made up of believers that have an unshakable mind and believers that exercise their gifts, not sit on the sidelines. And when that happens, notice that God gets the glory. No one person gets glory. No, it is a work of God and therefore He receives the glory.

It is God's desire that we have an unshakable mind. We develop that when we arm our mind, grow into maturity, and when we consider the weight of eternity.

### **CONCLUSION: GOSPEL**

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>i</sup> Works consulted in preparation for this message: Thomas R. Schreiner, *The New American Commentary: 1, 2 Peter, Jude: Vol. 37*, B&H Publishing: Nashville, 2003; Scot McKnight, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 Peter*, Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1996; Paul A. Cedar, *The Communicators Commentary: James, 1, 2 Peter, Jude*, Word Books: Waco, 1984; John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 1 Peter*, Moody Publishers: Chicago, 2004; William Barclay, *The Letters of James and Peter*, Westminster Press: Philadelphia, 1976; Max Anderson, *Holman New Testament Commentary: I & II Peter, I, II, III John, Jude*, Holman Reference: Nashville, 1999; David Guzik, *Enduring Word Commentary: 1 Peter 4*, published by Enduring Word Ministries, accessed online: <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/1-peter-4/>; Troy Rackliffe, "Stand Firm in Your Faith: Message 8," preached at Glade Community Church, notes given by Troy Rackliffe; Bryan Loritts, "Together We Endure: The Same Kind of Different as He," sermon preached at Summit Church, August 2, 2020, accessed online: <https://summitchurch.com/message/the-same-kind-of-different-as-he>; Skip Heitzig, "Rock Solid: Just Counting Time or Making Time Count?," sermon preached at Calvary Albuquerque, March 23, 2014, accessed online: <https://calvarynm.church/connectwithskip/teachings/series/175/sermon/2390>.

<sup>ii</sup> Strong's Concordance, 3695, hoplizo.

<sup>iii</sup> Schreiner, page 199.

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.mlb.com/news/yogisms-best-yogi-berra-sayings>.

<sup>v</sup> Schreiner, page 201.

<sup>vi</sup> Strong's Concordance, 3579, xenizo.

<sup>vii</sup> Ibid., 987, blasphemeo.

<sup>viii</sup> Pointed out by McKnight, page 231.

<sup>ix</sup> For further discussion, see Schreiner, pages 207-210.

<sup>x</sup> McKnight, page 237.

<sup>xi</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xii</sup> Strong's Concordance, 5382, philoxenos.

<sup>xiii</sup> Ronald Brownstein, "How Has Technology Changes the Concept of Community?," article published by The Atlantic, October 10, 2015, accessed online: <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2015/10/community-in-the-digital-age/408961/>.

<sup>xiv</sup> For an exhaustive list of Spiritual Gifts see Romans 12, Ephesians 4, and 1 Corinthians 12, 13, and 14.