

**STUDYING THROUGH
1 PETER (23)**



**They Think it Strange
1 Peter 4:4-6**

Previously

Peter continues to encourage his audience to faithfully endure, even though they were facing trials and tribulations.

In our last lesson we noted the need for a changed life – a holy life to God, looking to the example of Christ.

Previously

Today, we continue to examine how we are different. Specifically, we want to notice the reaction of an ungodly world to the way we live our lives.

NOTE: Today, I want to focus on some material from 1 Peter that was discussed last month in my preacher studies.

They think it strange (4:4)

We no longer run with them
A clear reference to a changed life.
One that is clearly evident – when
one is converted out of the world,
do they see that you are different?
See **4:2-3**

They think it strange (4:4)

We no longer run with them

Let us NEVER forget that we are
“strangers and pilgrims”

1 Peter 1:1 – pilgrims of the
dispersion

1:17 – “your stay here...”

2:11 – sojourners and pilgrims

They think it strange (4:4)

We no longer run with them

What does it mean to be an alien?

- You are a foreigner
- Rules and culture are different.

They require adaptation.

- Requires caution to avoid being trapped or taken advantage of

- You represent your “homeland”
(cf. **1:17**)

They think it strange (4:4)

They look at us strangely

We know we need to be different!

Typically, the foreigner is recognized – appearance, language, habits, etc.

They will view us through their perception of what life is like

(NOTE: We do the same with them – expecting them to conform to our views)

They think it strange (4:4)

They look at us strangely

Consider Paul in Athens – **Acts**

17:18-20, he was viewed as a
babbler and proclaimer of foreign
gods

NOTE: To their credit, they were at
least willing to listen to him (unlike
so many today).

They think it strange (4:4)

They look at us strangely

The world today looks at Christians as strange:

- They do not understand what or **WHY** we believe as we do (and often do not want to)
- If we were “raised in the church” we might understand them either (e.g., I cannot fathom naturalism)

They think it strange (4:4)

They look at us strangely

The world today looks at Christians as strange:

- Consider that for decades, our society has been fed a steady diet of evolution, atheism, situation ethics, humanism, self-discovery, amorality.

To a degree we (believers) are complicit because we have flippantly disregarded their advances and failed to prepare our own to face this world.

They think it strange (4:4)

They speak evil of us

Consider the conditions in Peter's time.

- Likely these brethren were facing some persecutions.
- Christianity had become very unpopular, and hostilities were intensifying
- Likely, rejection and reactions were varied and localized
- Not all Christians were suffering
- With time, troubles would intensify and increase

They think it strange (4:4)

They speak evil of us

Consider the conditions in Peter's time.

- History in the Roman empire showed gradual progression of increased persecutions.
- As 1 Peter is written, empire wide reactions were in their infancy
- Nero is likely Caesar, who focused on Christians in Rome

They think it strange (4:4)

They speak evil of us

Consider the conditions in Peter's time.

- Typically, Rome was very ecumenical AS LONG AS people viewed other religions as equally valid AND accepted Roman imposed religion (i.e., Caesar worship, acknowledging their gods, etc.)
- Christians would NOT bow to such which is WHY they paid a price

They think it strange (4:4)

They speak evil of us

Consider the conditions in Peter's time.

- Because of this, Christians were despised.

- cf. **Acts 19:21-24** – Paul in Ephesus (near riots because of Diana)

They think it strange (4:4)

They speak evil of us

Consider the conditions in Peter's time.

- Typically, persecutions would begin with verbal abuse and the shaming of espoused Christian values.
- Christians were viewed with suspicion
- The goal of society was to produce conformity

They think it strange (4:4)

They speak evil of us

Consider the conditions in Peter's time.

- Verbal abuse is primarily what we see in 1 Peter (**4:4** – speaking evil of you)

2:12 – speak against you as evil doers

2:15 – ignorance of foolish men

3:9 – reviling

3:16 - defamed as evil doers

4:14 – reproached for the name of Christ

They think it strange (4:4)

They speak evil of us

Consider the conditions in Peter's time. Some events unfolding:

- Christians accused of failing to be “tolerant”
- Mocking of true Christian values (e.g., “cannibalism”, “incest”)
- Being overly inclusive
(**cf. Galatians 3:28**)
- Making the Christian life “politically incorrect”

They think it strange (4:4)

They speak evil of us

Consider the conditions in Peter's time.

Some events unfolding:

- In some instances, there might be social rejection – severing of ties, loss of revenue, etc. Eventually, Christianity would be outlawed in the empire driving Christians “underground”

Severe persecutions by Caesars and locals would eventually develop.

(Nero and Domitian were mild in comparison to upcoming persecutions)

They think it strange (4:4)

They speak evil of us

Consider the conditions in OUR time.

- True Christianity is “politically incorrect”
- Efforts to shame and guilt us into conformity
- We are branded as intolerant (which they define)
- We are threatened if we do not change
- Our faith is often attacked from every direction

They think it strange (4:4)

They speak evil of us

Consider the conditions in OUR time.

- Up to this point, our “persecutions” have been primarily verbal.

- But what is next?

Will we lose our freedom to openly assemble?

Will we be protected in this?

Will we face economic consequences?

Will preachers/elders be prosecuted for preaching the whole counsel of God?

What will this eventually lead to?

They think it strange (4:4)

They speak evil of us

Concerning such events unfolding:

- Typically, persecutions develop gradually (baby steps) so that the unobservant fail to see what is really happening (consider how our media and in some instances our school system have desensitized the people to Biblical morality).

In some congregations, there are subjects that are “off limits” (MDR, modesty, entertainment, social drinking, homosexuality, abortion, etc.)

They think it strange (4:4)

They speak evil of us

- Is it getting worse?

Cf. **2 Timothy 3:1-5**, – later days,
perilous times will come
12-13 – we WILL suffer
persecutions, evil men and
imposters will grow worse and
worse...

They think it strange (4:4)

What can we do about this?

1) Let us resolve that we are going to be faithful and holy – **1 Peter 1:15**

2) We need to strengthen our faith – **Hebrews 11:6.** We need to prepare ourselves

3) Live peaceably with all men – **Romans 12:17, Ephesians 5:7**

They think it strange (4:4)

What can we do about this?

4) Be serious and watchful in your prayers – **1 Peter 4:7**

5) Let God take care of the ungodly
– **1 Peter 4:5, Romans 12:19-21, 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9, etc.**

They think it strange (4:4)

What can we do about this?

6) Live with the hope of heaven - **1**

Peter 1:6

- Likely the dead of this verse is a reference those who have passed on suffering for His cause (e.g.

Stephen – **Acts 7:57-60, Hebrews 11:32-40**)

- But they live on, resting from their labors (**Revelation 14:13**)



Studies in 1 Peter



Peter is reminding his audience that they might pay a price for their faith. Would they be willing?



Studies in 1 Peter



**Am I willing to pay the
required price for my
faith?**



Studies in 1 Peter



Let us pray!