

1 Peter 4:12-19 Suffering for Following Jesus

12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. 14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. 16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter. 17 For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" 19 Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

They first saw it on Facebook – a post about a missing dog that read: "Lost dog with three legs. Blind in left eye. Missing right ear. Tail broken. Answers to the name of 'Lucky.' " [laughter]

A) Sometimes we feel anything but Lucky when tragedy or difficulty comes our way.

B) My greatest difficulty as a Pastor is when I am meeting with a precious saint –

1) When some member of our church family facing a tragedy.

C) Lord Why? Why do they have to go through this – so hard.

I know the answers theologically – we have studied it already in our study of 1 Peter

A) In our first two studies back in chapter 1 – God uses the trial and suffering –

B) like the goldsmith uses the fire to purify the gold.

C) God uses it to purify us – to make us more like Jesus!

D) The Apostle James teaches a similar thing in his epistle when he says:

² My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. ⁴ But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. – James 1:2-4

Although we understand the purpose of suffering theologically – it is still hard when you are going through it!

A) Or when someone you love is going through it

B) Now in Chapter 1 Peter deals with the subject of suffering in a more general sense

C) In our passage today Peter is talking about Suffering specifically for being a follower of Jesus - 14 If you are reproached (ridiculed or insulted) for the name of Christ, blessed are you,

D) This is something you can bank on in your life as a Jesus follower –

1) the More committed you become in following Jesus

E) The more Hostile our world becomes toward the things of God –

1) YOU WILL SUFFER REPROACH.

Today as we unpack this passage: Peter gives us six directives of how to respond to suffering –

A) when we suffer for being a Jesus Follower!

B) First Directive: Don't be surprised when suffering comes your way. V.12 "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you."

C) "Beloved" --- isn't that a beautiful word? Speaks of Affection –

1) Peter is not writing to an audience he is writing to a Flock! He's a pastor.

D) Saying - I love you, and what's more, God loves you."

Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you,

A) Don't think it's weird or bizarre or unusual when you suffer; it's not.

B) It is the norm for followers of Jesus

C) Notice the phrase fiery trial –

Now back in chapter 1 Peter uses the idea of fire in his analogy of the goldsmith.

A) But this time I think he has something different in mind

B) Most Scholars believe that Peter penned this letter at the end of 64 AD. Now why is that important?

C) If you know your history, you know that something very significant happened in the summer of 64 AD.

D) For nine weeks beginning on July 16th Rome burned.

1) And most people believed it was the emperor's fault, Caesar Nero started the fires.

Caesar had a passion for building. He didn't like the old city. He wanted to expand it and renew it.

A) So parts of the city he didn't like were set on fire –

B) and when People tried to put out the fires they were stopped by the Roman Soldiers

C) The word was circulating throughout Rome that Caesar was responsible for starting the fires –

1) And people who had lost their homes, the lives of loved ones,

D) They were in such furor that they turned against Caesar Nero almost in an all-out revolt.

Caesar knew he needed to do something.

A) He needed a scapegoat. Who do you think he chose? The Christians.

B) "Let's blame it on the Christians, they weren't liked anyway.

1) So I'll say they did it." And he said they did it.

C) And to display the idea that he believed they did it, he took many of them

1) and put them on poles with ropes while they were alive,

D) He doused them in pitch, and used them as torches to light up the imperial gardens at night.

1) That began a 200-year reign of terror against the believers that were in Rome.

E) It all started in AD 64 the same time that Peter wrote the letter – referring to the fiery trial.

Peter says don't be surprised or think it strange – when you are reproached for following Jesus

A) Why would he say that? –

B) Jesus said: Don't be surprised when the World hates you –

1) "The world hated me and it will also hate you."

C) The Apostle John tells us why: ¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. John 3:19-20

Have you ever had this happen: You walk into a room and the conversation stops – Awkward

A) Or you walk in and people are clicking off their phones – or sort of scattering

B) You didn't say a word – but something was going down that wasn't good – wasn't righteous –

1) Your presence brought exposure.

C) Awkward silence – looks the stares they look away

D) That is what happens – A Christian who is following Jesus –

1) their life can have the same effect as turning on the light with someone sleeping in a dark room – annoying

When Jesus was alive and living in Israel – his very life exposed the darkness and the hypocrisy

A) that was looming large in Israel

B) And – a true follower of Jesus can have that same affect

1) The world doesn't like it – they are not going to like you

C) You don't have to say a word – but people know what you stand for.

D) Or in today's cancel culture – they assume they know what you stand for.

E) Christians today – get thrown into a box – Homophobic – racist –

1) right wing conservative and fanatical

The tension and hostility against followers of Jesus is growing in this country – around the world

A) So what Peter said to this group of believers in AD 64 is just as real for us today

B) Don't be surprised – don't think it strange when you are reproached for following Jesus

C) Peter says – don't be surprised it comes with the territory – that is his first directive

2nd Directive: Rejoice! Verses 13 and 14: 13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. 14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.

A) Rejoice." I don't know how that hits your ears,

B) But I imagine for somebody who is suffering the kind of atrocities they were suffering,

1) they probably even thought, "Really? Are you serious Peter? Have you lost your mind?"

C) In Chapter one Peter focused on the purpose of suffering what suffering can do when handled right – 1) Purifies us and makes us more like Jesus

Here in Chapter 4 He is making a different point –

A) He is not talking so much about the purpose of suffering – but the outcome 2 things

B) #1 It brings us into a deeper union with Jesus –

C) When we are suffering for being a Christ follower – partaker of his suffering.

D) Partaker we get our word – partnership – union

1) and we experience a new reality of the presence and power of Jesus being active in our lives.

Sometimes we hear of the atrocities that Christians in other countries are facing today

A) Read stories of Christians today other countries – being beheaded for their faith –

B) we wonder could I endure that? Would I stand?

1) Would I be able to handle that?

C) I believe there is a certain grace and strength God gives to people in the moment

D) Corrie Ten Boom – ticket for the train? – On the day

1) God gives us strength in due season – Grace for the moment

So #1 Rejoice because the suffering brings you into a deeper partnership with Jesus –

A) You experience his presence and power in a way that you normally would not

B) And #2 Rejoice because you share in his glory!

14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God **rests upon** you.

C) Rest like a mantle – or a badge of Honor - His glory rest upon you.

D) Peter has in mind here Jesus sermon on the mount

1) Jesus repeats something he heard Jesus say – Matt. 5

“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” (Matthew 5:11, 12)

D) Great is your reward in heaven!

E) There is a glory that rest upon you and a glory that awaits you –

1) When you endure suffering for the name of Jesus

So 1st Directive don't be surprised or think it strange! 2nd Directive – rejoice

A)3rd Directive Keep your suffering Pure - 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters.

B)Notice first of all, don't you find this interesting that in the list of "murderers, thieves evildoers

1)he includes a busybody."

C)Just let that sink in for a moment – Why would he include Busybodies in that list?

1)They do as much damage.

D)They kill a person's reputation – they still their dignity

1)Sowing discord is evil in the sight of the Lord – Seven things the Lord hates

Now what do I mean here by saying keep your suffering pure?

A)When you suffer for the name of Christ – don't retaliate

B)Here is what it would mean for the people in the first century reading Peter's letter –

1)Don't retaliate you Roman Christians when the government confiscates your property, by becoming a thief.

C)Don't retaliate, Roman Christians, when they're violent against you by murdering them.

Here is the temptation that we all face when someone is treating us poorly.

A)We want revenge – we want to treat them poorly as well.

B)Peter says – don't do that – Vengeance is mine say the Lord –

1)entrust your reputation to him – Entrust your heart to him

C)Let God be your defense.

16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.

A)If you respond to reproach with retaliation you will end up being ashamed!

B)But if you resist that temptation – to retaliate God will be glorified in your life and in the matter.

16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. ESV

C)I think the ESV is on to something here

Peter says, "But let him glorify God in the name."

Peter is suggesting That suffering actually reinforces my identity. I've taken His name.

A)It's now my name because we are of the same family.

B)The Name Christian was first used in a derogatory way – little Christ –

1)Remind us of that Jesus guy

C)Could tell been with Jesus

They meant it in a derogatory way – became a badge of honor

A)I am a Christian and I glory in my identity.

B)I glory in that name. – No matter what anyone else says

16 But it is no shame to suffer for being a Christian. Praise God for the privilege of being called by his name! NLT

4th Directive: Consider God's judgment: 17 For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

A)The word that's used in this passage for 'judgment' is not the word for 'condemnation'

B)We are not condemned – there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus

1)Jesus already took the wrath that we deserved on Calvary

C)No Double Jeopardy

The Word Peter uses here for Judgment speaks of Discipline

A)The Bible tells us that whom the Lord loves he disciplines -

B)God is committed to you – Parent to a child – he is going to discipline us –

1)not to hurt us but to correct us – change us – refine us

C)Judgment begins with the House of God – because we have a role to play in God’s order – His mission

1)Unrighteousness – ruins our witness

Now if you are in sin – and you are not being disciplined it means one of two things

A)You are either not a child of God – that is why you are not being disciplined

B)Or God is just being patient and gracious right now giving you time to repent

C)It doesn’t mean that God is approving of your sin – or he doesn’t care

Discipline:

A)Consequences

B)Divine Punishment – Jonah as storm and a whale –

C)Again the purpose was to get Jonah to his destination and for the work of God in his and through his life to come to fruition

D)God’s heart toward you.

This verse really magnifies the Holiness of God – He doesn’t wink at sin

A)He doesn’t just let it go by –

B)He would not be a just Judge if he did that –

C)He deals with sin –

He chose to deal with the sin problem by sending his son to pay the price for our sins on the cross

A)at Calvary – died in our place – took the punishment we deserved.

Aa)This is what Peter means in V. 18 – **When he says scarcely saved** –

B)We are only saved by the grace of God

1)Not of works – no human effort

C)Those who reject grace – no chance – in other words you do not get to heaven by being good

D)Jesus is not Santa Claus trying to determine who is naughty and who is nice

E)Jesus made the way: Receive him – Sons of God – Reject – destined to be separated for eternity

5th Directive: Rest in God and keep working V.19

Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

A) Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God"---stop right there, please.

B)Underline that, please, or remember this- that's in the Bible.

1)Some of you have been told that, "**Suffering is never in the will of God.**"

C)God wants his children always to be healthy, wealthy always to be smiling,

1)Blessed = no problems – only good things are happening to me

D)Not only is that not true -That is not what the Bible says –

1)You would have to rip this page out of your Bible

E)As well as John 16 – Jesus said: In this world you **will have** tribulation

F)Those who seek to live godly in Christ – WILL SUFFER PERSECUTION

In other words it comes with the territory of being a follower of Jesus V.19 Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

A)"Let those who suffer according to the will of God"---what should they do?

B)They should commit---"commit their souls to him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator."

C)The word "commit" is a banking term that means to deposit something for safekeeping.

1)"I'm going to deposit my trust. I do not understand what's happening in this world around me.

This is so hard. This is so painful. I don't get it. I want answers, they're not coming,

A)So what I will do is deposit my trust in God's bank." That's the picture.

B)And here's the truth: when you deposit your trust in God's bank, you will get dividends of blessings in your account.

C)He won't let anything you deposit go to waste. Every bit of trust you deposit will be rewarded.

So you deposit your trust in God and Keep doing good!

A)Keep Shinning! Keep serving! Keep living for Jesus

B)More than conquerors through him who loved us

C)As we wrap up our time today -Communion and then a Baptism

Communion: We are remembering what Jesus did for us

A)He took the wrath that we deserved!

B)Body bore the pain that was ours

C)Blood was shed – Redemption – brought into the family of God –

1)New identity – Not saved – get saved

But in Communion – we are celebrating our identity and union with Jesus!

A)Naming the Name – this is who I belong too

B)Almost like renewing our vows

C)Lord We are committing ourselves to you.