

“Suffering as a Christian”

1 Peter 4:12-19

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I. Introduction

- A. Peter is writing to strengthen the suffering saints
 - 1. They were facing a fiery trial
 - 2. Peter wanted them to be able to stand
 - 3. He exhorts and instructs them concerning the inner response they should have when they suffer as a Christian (v. 16)
 - 4. Peter gives us four inner attitudes to help us in times of suffering

II. Expect Suffering (1 Peter 4:12)

- A. Do not be surprised
 - 1. The natural reaction of the human heart is to regard our suffering as strange or alien
 - 2. Why? Because we think God’s children should be kept from suffering
 - 3. “Strange” means “foreign” or “alien”
 - 4. God’s people have always suffered
 - 5. Does that mean God doesn’t love me?
 - a) No
 - b) “Beloved” (v. 12)
 - 6. Does that mean that God is not in control?
 - a) No
 - b) “Happened” means “to go together”
 - c) Illustration- Job
 - d) God is trying you
 - 1) “Trial” (v. 12)
 - 2) “Every adverse experience when rightly received can carry its quota of good” – A. Sanders

III. Rejoice in Suffering (1 Peter 4:13-14)

- A. “But” (v. 13)
 - 1. A sharp contrast
 - 2. Instead of causing them bewilderment, their suffering as Christians should prompt them to rejoice
- B. “Rejoice” (v. 13)
 - 1. Be constantly rejoicing
 - 2. “Rejoice and be exceedingly glad” (Matthew 5:12)
 - 3. (James 1:2)
- C. Reasons to rejoice
 - 1. Our suffering means fellowship with Christ (v. 13)
 - a) (Philippians 3:10)

- b) Illustration- Daniel 3
- 2. Our suffering now means glory in the future (v. 13)
 - a) Mount of Transfiguration
 - b) (Romans 8:18)
 - c) God will transform suffering into glory
- 3. Our suffering brings to us the ministry of the Holy Spirit (v. 14)
 - a) Shekinah glory
 - b) Illustration- Stephen (Acts 7)
 - c) Literally “rests with refreshing power”
- 4. Our suffering enables us to glorify God (v. 14)
 - a) “A photographer carries his picture into a darkened room, that he may bring out its features. He says the light of the sun would mar the impression on the sensitized plate. There are features of spiritual beauty which cannot be produced in a life in the glare of human joy and prosperity. God brings out in many a soul its loveliest qualities when the curtain is drawn and the light of human joy is shut out.” – J.R. Miller

IV. Examine Your Life (1 Peter 4:15-18)

- A. The furnace of suffering often brings more light by which we can see our lives in light of God’s holiness
 - 1. It’s God’s refining process to remove the dross and purify us
 - 2. Questions we should ask
 - a) Am I suffering because of my sin? (v. 15)
 - 1) Illustration- Reap and sow
 - b) Am I ashamed or glorifying God? (v. 16)
 - 1) Let him glorify God
 - 2) Habitual response
 - c) Am I concerned for the lost when I suffer? (vv. 17-18)
 - 1) Times of suffering are opportunities to witness to the unsaved
 - 2) (Acts 16)
 - 3) Don’t seek revenge on those who have hurt you. Seek to lead them to Jesus

V. Commit Yourself to God (1 Peter 4:19)

- A. Our suffering does not come to us by blind chance, but in harmony with God’s loving will (v. 19)
 - 1. Don’t complain or resist
- B. Commit
 - 1. It’s continually entrusting oneself to God’s protective care. The picture is that of giving over or entrusting something to the care and protection of another
 - a) “Casting all your cares upon Him” (5:7)
- C. Keep doing well
 - 1. “In well doing” (v. 19)
- D. Remember, He is a faithful Creator (v. 19)
 - 1. (2 Timothy 1:12)

2. Expect suffering
3. Rejoice in suffering
4. Examine your life