

# **“Suffering as a Christian”**

## **1 Peter 4:12-19**

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### **I. Introduction**

A. God has only one Son without sin, but none without sorrow.

1. Peter is writing to strengthen the suffering saints. They were facing a fiery trial (v.12), and Peter wanted them to be able to “stand” (1 Peter 5:12).
2. Peter gives us four inner attitudes to help us in times of suffering.

### **II. Expect Suffering (1 Peter 4:12)**

A. “Beloved, do not think it strange” (v. 12).

1. “Do not be surprised.”
  - a) It’s an attitude of bewilderment,
2. It also means “don’t think it’s forgotten” or “alien”
3. We often think that, as Christians, we should be kept from suffering, or we think that God must not love us if we do suffer.
  - a) God loves us- “beloved” (v. 12)
4. We think God is not in control
  - a) “Some strange thing happened to you” (v. 12).
    - 1) “Happened” is literally “to go together” or “to happen by chance.”
      - a. Illustration- Job
  - b) The fiery trial is by God’s design
  - c) It was a “trial” (v.12)
    - 1) God is testing them to prove their worth
    - 2) J.A. Sanders- *“Every adverse experience, when rightly received, can carry its quota of good.”*
  - d) Expect suffering. Christians are not exempt

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

A. “But” (v. 13)

1. Instead of responding in bewilderment, their suffering should prompt them to rejoice.
  - a) “Rejoice” or “constantly rejoicing”
  - b) “Don’t freak out.”
  - c) Sing out in joy to the Lord.

- 1) Illustration- Paul and Silas (Acts 16)
- 2) “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials” (James 1:2).

B. How can I rejoice in my trials?

1. Remember, your suffering means fellowship in the sufferings of Christ.
  - a) “You partake of Christ’s sufferings” (v. 13).
  - b) “That I may know Him” (Philippians 3:10).
  - c) The three Hebrews (Daniel 10)
2. Our suffering for Him now means glory in the future.
  - a) “That when his glory is revealed, you may also be glad also with exceeding joy” (v. 13).
  - b) We Christians have hope beyond this life.
    - 1) “I reckon that...” (Romans 8:18).
    - 2) Illustration- A baby born—so God will transform our suffering into glory
3. Our suffering brings to us the ministry of the Holy Spirit.
  - a) “If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you” (v. 14).
    - 1) Illustration- Stephen (Acts 7)
    - 2) In the dark but never at a distance
    - 3) “The valley of deepest darkness” (Psalm 23)
4. Our suffering gives us an opportunity to glorify God.
  - a) “...on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified” (v. 14 KJV).
  - b) J.R. Miller- *“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.”*

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

A. The fires of affliction often bring 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

B. Ask yourself when you suffer:

1. Am I suffering because of my sin? (v. 15)
2. Am I ashamed or bringing glory to God? (v. 16)

3. Am I concerned for the lost when I suffer? (vv. 17-18)
  - a) Times of suffering are opportunities for witness to “them that obey not the gospel of God” (v. 17).
  - b) Illustration- Paul and Silas and the Philippian jailer (Acts 16)

## **V. Commit Yourself to God When You Suffer (1 Peter 4:19)**

- A. “Wherefore”
  1. Peter’s summary directive for his suffering readers
- B. Our suffering is part of God’s loving purpose, plan, and will for our lives (v. 19)
  1. “Suffer according to the will of God” (v. 19).
- C. “Commit” (v. 19).
  1. It’s a banking term.
  2. It’s continually entrusting yourself to God’s protective care.
    - a) “Casting all your cares” (1 Peter 5:7).
- D. Keep doing well (v. 19)
  1. “In well doing” (v. 19).
  2. We must leave to God all that depends on Him and think only of being faithful in all that depends upon ourselves.
- E. Remember, He’s a faithful Creator (v. 19)
  1. “As to a faithful Creator” (v. 19).
  2. All that we see in His creation teaches us to trust Him for all we cannot see
  3. Remember, “what is hidden from us is not hidden from Him.”
  4. “...for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day” (2 Timothy 1:12).

## **VIII. Conclusion**

- A. Expect suffering
- B. Rejoice in your suffering
- C. Examine your life
- D. Commit yourself to God