

**The Sojourner’s Life – Suffering with Purpose**

**1 Peter 4:12-19**

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Last week....

In 1 Peter 4:7-11, Matt spoke on how we can live with a proper perspective of time by:

Glorifying God in our own lives - A Christian has a distinctly different lifestyle.

Glorifying God in relationships - A Christian prioritizes relationships of love and forgiveness.

Glorifying God through Christian Service - A Christian exercises the gifts of the Spirit in service.

Peter is writing to Christians scattered throughout 4 Roman provinces in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey) who are minorities in the midst of pagan, often hostile communities.

Therefore, the theme of suffering is an important and dominant one in the letter.

Is Christian suffering always:

A) punishment for sin or B) the result of a lack of faith? Neither.

Peter was writing to Christians who were suffering because of their faith in Christ, not a lack of it. In the Christian life, suffering always has purpose.

Obedience to God may involve suffering. "Although (Jesus) was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered." (Hebrews 5:8 – see also 1 Peter 2:21-23).

3 Pictures of good outcomes from suffering in the Scriptures:

1) The Discipline of the Father - (Heb 12:5-11 from Deut 8:5, Prov 3:11-12)

2) The Refiner of Silver and Gold (Ps 66:10; Isa 48:10, Zech 13:9 - 1 Pet 1:6-7)

3) The Pruner of the Vine (John 15:1-8)

(From John Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, IVP: Nottingham 1986, page 365-366.)

Verse 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.”

‘Fiery trial’ = refining fire (cf 1 Peter 1:6-7, Proverbs 27:21).

Including accusations of doing wrong (2:12), physical abuse (2:18-20), insults (2:23, 3:9), threats (3:14) and ridicule (4:49).

Psalm 66:10-12 - "For you, God, tested us; you refined us like silver. You brought us into prison and laid burdens on our backs. You let people ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, but you brought us to a place of abundance."

Verse 13: “But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed."   (See also James 1:2-4)

We need a long-term view of suffering (see Hebrews 11:2 and 2 Corinthians 4:17).

Therefore, never evaluate in the darkness of your struggles today, what can only be understood in the light of God's glory tomorrow.

Verse 14: “ If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.”

It calls to mind Isaiah 11:2 – the Spirit that rested on Messiah now rests on us, and Matthew 5:11-12.

Verse 15 – the caveat.

Verse 16 – Glorify God as a Christian (‘Christian’ only used here and in Acts 11:26 and 26:28). A Christian is one who belongs to Christ.

Verse 17-18 – “It is time for judgement to being at the household of

 God.” Judgement = Gk. “krima” meaning sentence or decree.

God’s people do experience trials of various kinds and the judgement of God first (Jeremiah 5:29; Zechariah 13:7-9; Mark 13:19-20; Acts 14:22; 1 Thessalonians 3:3-4; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; Rev 2:10).

But we will ALL one day stand before the judgement seat of God (2

 Cor 5:10, 1 Peter 4:5)

Verse 20: 2 things we must therefore do in our suffering for Christ:

 1) ‘Entrust their souls to a faithful creator’ and

 2) continue to 'do good'.

Summary:

1. As we share in Christ's sufferings today, so we will rejoice when his glory is revealed tomorrow. (vs 13)

2. We are blessed when we are insulted for the name of Christ. God's glorious Spirit rests on us. (vs 14)

3. We need to glorify God as we bear the name of Christ (vs 16).

4. Judgement begins with us for our good, but ends with terrifying consequences for the ungodly and sinner. (vs 17-18).

5. Let us entrust ourselves to God and keep on doing good, we were suffer according to God's will.

Application questions: how will you suffer for Christ? Will you willingly face it with faith, sharing in the sufferings of Christ so that we may rejoice when he comes in glory?