

Suffering is Joy (8)

(1 Peter 4:12-19)

Finding Hope in a
Hopeless World

Suffering for Being a Christian

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And, "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good (1 Peter 4:12-19)

Suffering is an Ordinary Part of Our Life

- Suffering is nothing new
 - Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed (1 Peter 4:12-13).
- How to respond to suffering?
 - Two responses: Be surprised (something wrong) or Rejoice (suffering is joy);
 - Command: Do not be surprised but rejoice. Why?
 - Suffering is real, and normal. In this world you will have tribulation (John 16:33).
 - It tests (purifies) you! The fiery ordeal (terrible trouble; testing that is like walking through fire). Like the goldsmith uses the fire to purify the gold.
- Suffering is a blessing
 - What are we rejoicing in? Not trial itself but being with Jesus. It is a privilege because suffering Christians partake (Koinonia, fellowship with Jesus) of Christ's suffering.

Why Suffering is Joy?

- There is blessing in suffering
 - If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you (1 Peter 4:14).
- Two outcomes of suffering
 1. It brings us into a deeper union with Jesus: When we are suffering for being a Christ followers (partakers: partnership) of His suffering.
 - Rejoice because the suffering brings you into a deeper partnership with Jesus. “If you are insulted because **you bear the name of Christ**, you will be blessed” (1 Peter 4:14, NLT).
 2. You share in His glory: His glory rests upon you and a glory awaits you.
 - On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part, He is glorified (1 Peter 4:14, NKJV).
 - Blessed are you when people **insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad**, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you (Matthew 5:11-12).

But No Blessing in Suffering for Sin

- Two reasons of suffering: Shameful vs. Glorious
 - If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you **bear that name** (1 Peter 4:15-16).
 - Shameful suffering for wrongdoing (your sin). Justifiable punishment.
 - Glorious suffering for Christ's name, A sign of blessing. Don't be ashamed.
- There is no shame in suffering for Christ
 - Suffering for Christ is seen as an opportunity to witness to others, to align with Christ's own suffering, and to strengthen your faith.
 - The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name (Acts 5:41).
- Let him glorify God in that name (1 Peter 4:16, ESV)
 - Suffering actually reinforces my identity. I've taken His name (Christian; little Christ).
 - I am a Christian and I glory in my identity no matter what anyone else says.

Purification through Suffering for Christ

- God permits suffering to test His people
 - For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? (1 Peter 4:17).
 - Judgement (Discipline, divine punishment not condemnation): There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (ex. Jonah as storm and a fish).
 - These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold... So, when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed (1 Peter 1:7).
- God uses suffering to make a people for His name
 - God uses suffering to separate the nominal Christians from those who truly belong to Him.
 - I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted...My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you (Job 42:2 & 5).
 - If you are in sin and you are not disciplined it means two options: 1) you are not a child of God; 2) God is patient and gracious now giving you time to repent.

- How God deals with sin?
 - If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner? (1 Peter 4:18).
 - If the righteous one is **scarcely saved**, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear? (1 Peter 4:18, NKJV).
 - This is not to say salvation is earned through suffering, but rather that the Christian life involves a difficult process of purification and perseverance through trials.
- We are scarcely saved
 - He chose to deal with sin by sending His son to pay the price for our sins on the cross. We are only saved by the grace of God (not by our works).
 - Those who reject grace: No chance to get to haven -> Destined to be separated for eternity.
 - It reminds us of an urgent call for unbelievers, urging us to share the gospel and for the ungodly to embrace to Jesus as the only Savior.

Trust God in Suffering

- Trust God while doing good
 - So then, those who suffer according to God's will should **commit** themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good (1 Peter 4:19).
 - Commit: a banking term that means to deposit something for safekeeping. I'm going to deposit my trust. When my deposit my trust in God's bank, I'll get dividends of blessings in my account.
 - Those who suffer according to the will of God should commit their souls to God in doing good.
- Who is God?
 - Faithful Creator.
 - You can't preserve yourself. Only God can.
 - Give your life to God and stop being anxious about your suffering.
 - Suffering will come but God will bring you home.
- Continue to do good
 - Keep shinning! Keep serving! Keep living for Jesus.

When God doesn't Make Sense

- Do not be surprised
 - Don't consider suffering for Christ as a strange or unexpected event.
- Embrace suffering with a right perspective
 - See suffering not as a punishment, but as an opportunity to glorify God and be refined.
- Trust in God's character
 - Remember that God is a faithful Creator who is in control, even when things are difficult.
- Continue to do good
 - Keep your focus on living a godly and obedient life, regardless of the hardships you face.