

Two-week mini-series trials – Last week we talked being joyful in trials...refined by trials

I've been through trials my life...physical...financial...relational...Never death persecution

But we think of persecution as physical persecution...Open Door = 13 per day / 5000 year

There is a really strong chance that you will not ever be killed for your faith...persecuted

- **Social Rejection and Ridicule** = Maligned – Insulted – Slander | Wrong despite right
 - The Fanatic Zealot – Portraying Christians as white haired, bible thumping, hypocrites
 - The Passive Do-gooder – Ned Flanders | Idiot box who has no spine...no brain behind
- **Economic and Social Discrimination** = Business Relationships – Family Acceptance
 - Missing job opportunities because 'Too outspoken about their faith'
 - Conflict with family members because your faith doesn't align with their beliefs

You may not have a gun to your head...but you experience persecution on varying levels

When you're being persecuted...when you are going through hardships...God is preparing

Do you believe all the hardships God is putting you through are refining you...purpose

Big Idea - God uses trials to purify our faith and prepare us for Heaven

- Trials loosen our grip on this world and increase our longing for the world to come
 - Suffering reminds us that this world is not our home...live with an eternal perspective
- October 16, 1555, Oxford, England, faithful preachers, Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley
Tied to the same stake and condemned to be burned alive...refused to deny the gospel
As the flames grew...Hugh Latimer, the older, saw Ridley struggling with the pain...said...
"Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle,
by God's grace, in England as I trust shall never be put out."

This was a man refined for Heaven by trials and persecution...we need to be ready...3 ways

1. We are refined for Heaven by: Sharing in Christ's suffering (12-13)

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. ¹³ But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

Most of us try and avoid suffering and pain...put themselves into harm on purpose = crazy

- We buy insurance, install security systems, and make plans to minimize pain...not crazy
- Yet Jesus never promised His followers a life free from hardship | Jesus said opposition
John 15:18-19 ¹⁸ "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. ¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. | World hates you Montagues and the Capulets

a. Expect the Fire: Suffering is Normal, Not Strange - Trials are inevitable God's people

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. Suffering is not abnormal Christianity—it is normal

- **Beloved** – Peter speaks a place of pastoral love before delivering a challenging truth
- Suffering for the Gospel and living in a broken world should not catch us off guard
- **Refiner's Fire:** The phrase "fiery trial" draws imagery from metallurgy
 - Furnace isn't meant to destroy the metal...burn away impurities and refine | Bullets
 - **Testing, Not Punishing:** Trials tests of faith, not signs of God's rejection or punishment
- When hardships come, we don't need to panic or assume God has abandoned us
The fire isn't a sign of His absence; it's the place where His refining presence is nearest

b. Shift Perspective: Sharing w/ King - But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings | 3

- **We share Christ's rejection** - Jesus was hated, mocked, falsely accused, and persecuted
 - When believers faithfully follow Him, they should expect similar treatment
 - Our suffering identifies us with Christ | "If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you."

- **We share Christ's mission** – Did Christ have a mission? Easy mission to accomplish?
 - Christ proclaimed truth despite opposition, we continue His work in a hostile world
 - Suffering often comes b/c we faithfully witness for Christ rather than compromise
- Holy Spirit Tension – Family or Friends who don't believe what you believe...awkward
- **We share Christ's character** - Trials conform believers to Christ
 - As Jesus responded with humility, love, and trust in the Father
 - Christians learn display those same qualities in suffering...Not my will, but your will

c. Keep Your Eyes on the Promise: Future Glory Outweighs Present Pain

that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. | Current Circumstances to Eternity

The present fire is temporary, but the coming glory is everlasting

- The trials of today are finite, but the joy prepared for us is infinite
- When Christ returns, every tear will be wiped away, every injustice made right
- The joy we will experience then will make every current hardship pale in comparison

Takeaway - Let Trials Strengthen Your Faith, Not Shake It

2. We are refined for Heaven by: Standing on our identity (14-16) | Proud of identity

¹⁴ If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.

Peter addresses believers navigating the harsh realities of social hostility & being ostracized

- He has gone broad with the idea of suffering and now he points to a specific suffering
 - Not addressing general suffering / illness / grief / natural consequences of wrongdoing
- He zeroes in on a specific category of trial: suffering specifically for the name of Christ
- First century, "Christian" was not a badge of respect – Loyal to Jesus...not Emperor
- Peter doing is drawing contrast here between suffering because of sin...suffering for Christ

a. Love their insults - If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed | People hate...bring it

- Reality of Friction: Follow Christ...world moving in the opposite direction will tension
- Train station – 300 people just got off and you're trying to get on...friction...wrong way
- Don't miss...we are blessed because we suffer for the name of Christ

Moses Rejected | Prophets Persecuted | Apostles Murdered | Jesus Crucified

World's insults cannot remove God's blessing...They confirm that we belong to Christ

- Don't take it personally – They insult you for who you represent not are | Soldier
- Reason we're blessed = "...because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you."
- "Rests upon you" speaks of God's abiding presence | OT Glory Cloud Tabernacle
- When suffer for Christ: God does not leave | HS Strengthens | Courage beyond ability
The world may heap shame upon God's people, but God covers them with His glory

b. Loathe your sins - But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler

Not all suffering honors God...sometimes suffering is the consequence of sinful choices

Self-inflicted suffering vs. Righteous Suffering – Not all suffering is holy

Murderers = Death Penalty | Steals = Imprisonment | Lies = Trust | Meddles = Relationships

- **Violent Sin** = Murder - Ultimate violation loving one's neighbor...contradiction | Hatred
- **Dishonest Sin** = Thief / Evildoer – Taking what belongs to another | Broad...marked sin
- **Disruptive Sin** = Meddler - Inserts matters do not belong...becomes busybody/ servant

Peter = If suffering comes into your life, let it never be because you have sinned

Before we assume we are being persecuted for righteousness, we must humbly ask:

Am I suffering because of Christ's character in me? My own foolishness or bad behavior?

- c. **Live to Glorify** – Strip away all the shame of being a Christian and wear badge proudly
 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name
Society often tries to make believers feel foolish, backward, or ashamed of their faith
 - *Recognize the Honor of Being Called a Christian* – Only used three times in the Bible
 - Peter assumes genuine Christians may suffer simply because they identify with Jesus
Privilege of wearing Christ's name is greater than the pain of suffering for His name
 - Persecution creates temptation to stay quiet, compromise convictions, or hide our
 - Peter demands that we reject the shame and accept the consequences | [All friends](#)
 - *Respond by Glorifying God* - but let him glorify God in that name
 - Peter moves beyond merely enduring suffering...opportunity for worship
 - When believers remain faithful under pressure, God is honored

Hardship becomes a platform: God is Faithful – God's Sustaining Grace – God's Worth
Our greatest testimony is seen not when life is easy but when Christ is enough during suffering
Takeaway - Wear the Name "Christian" with Pride, Not Shame

3. **We are refined for Heaven by: Staying faithful to God (17-19)**

¹⁷ For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

Peter ends with drawing a comparison between purifying judgment vs punitive judgment
Righteous saved through God's grace...ungodly face certain judgment apart from Christ

- It is important we understand the difference – God is not condemning children...world

God's Purifying Judgment:	God's Punitive Judgment:
Intended to Refine Believers	Intended to punish the unrepentant
Motivated by God's Fatherly Love	Motivated by God's Perfect Justice
Produces Holiness and Maturity	Results in Condemnation and Wrath
Temporary and Corrective	Final and Retributive
Experienced by God's Children	Experienced by those who Reject Christ

¹⁸ And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"

- "Scarcely saved" means saved through hardship | [Noah > flood](#) | [Israel > Red Sea](#) | [Paul](#)
God does not remove every storm; He brings His people safely through them

Peter acknowledges the reality of the Christian life

- The righteous suffer - Faith does not exempt us from pain.
- The righteous are opposed - The world resists the gospel
- The righteous persevere - God carries them through every trial
The believer is tested for a season...the unbeliever is condemned for an eternity

¹⁹ Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

Suffering comes, believers glorify God by trusting Him & faithfully continuing to do good

- a. **Trust God's Sovereign Purpose** - let those who suffer according to God's will
 - The suffering of believers is neither random nor meaningless
 - God uses it to refine faith, display His glory, and prepare His people for eternity
- b. **Trust in God's Faithful Protection** - entrust their souls to a faithful Creator
 - *Entrust* = Place something valuable into care of another for safekeeping | [TIME GOLD](#)
 - Peter says our most valuable possession—our soul—is safest in God's hands
- c. **Trust God with your Good Works** - while doing good.
 - Trusting God not passive - Faith continues to obey | Not wait till it gets easier...do good

The world expects suffering Christians to quit - God calls them to persevere

Takeaway - Choose obedience even when it is costly

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