

expound

EXPLORING THE
TRUTH OF THE
WORD OF GOD

1 Peter

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God's Grace in Suffering (Part 2)

1 Peter 4:1-19

Peter continues with the major theme of his letter – *Preparing Christians for Persecution*. In this passage before us he will take us to the Cross of Christ and to the Second Coming of Christ, using both as an encouragement to us to see time in light of eternity.

The Liberty of Salvation

4:1-6

In v. 1, Peter focuses on a major theme of salvation – “our union with Christ.”

“Therefore” ties the idea of our union with Christ with the final verses of chapter 3.

Peter begins with the suffering of Jesus on the cross.

There is a past event once for all – “suffered”

There is a continuing effect – “done with sin”

Jesus did not sin (2:22), but he “bore our sins” (2:24) in order to put an end to sin.

When he died, *we died* ... When he rose, *we rose*.

Peter is using the same theological principle as Paul in Romans 6:1-5.

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his.

Notice the key phrases from Romans 6:8-12...

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him...The death he died, he did to sin once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. In the same way count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desire.

Like Paul, Peter is speaking of an event in the past that marked the end of sin and the beginning of a life of righteousness.

In vv. 2-5, Peter builds on the theological principle of our union with Christ to encourage Christians about the liberty that is ours in salvation.

Our life of faith brings us into a new way of living.

A life that is no longer shaped by the desires of sin but by the will of God. (v. 2)

Those in the world think you are strange because you do not “fit the mold” of worldly life and often verbally abuse you for your lifestyle. (vv.3-5)

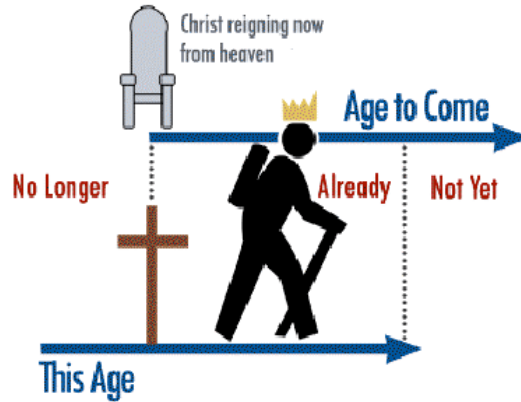
Peter reminds his readers of those Christians who are now dead (most likely martyrs) and that there will be a “payday someday” when God’s judgment will be supreme over the judgment of men. (v. 6)

Living in Light of the End 4:7-11

Christians in the Early Church lived with an expectancy of the imminent return of Jesus. (v. 7a)

“Is near” is Greek perfect tense meaning “has drawn near.”

We live in the overlap of this present (evil) age and the age (glorious) to come.



The fact that he did not return during that time did not invalidate his promise. (see 2 Peter 3)

Peter lays out practical guidelines for end-time living (vv. 7b-11)

1. Be clear minded and self-controlled
2. Pray
3. Love each other deeply (fervently)
4. Offer hospitality without grumbling
5. Use the gift God has given you to minister His grace.

Each person is gifted by God to serve.

We are to steward (manage) these gifts that brings ministry to people and glory to God.

There are two categories of gifts – speaking and serving – and both are equally needed.

The Blessing of Suffering for Christ 4:12-19

Suffering for the name of Christ should not be considered strange. (v. 12)

We should rejoice in our participation in “the suffering of Christ.” (vv. 13-16)

This does not mean that we add to the atoning work of Christ, but that we are following in his steps. (See Philippians 1:29 and Philippians 3:10)

Our rejoicing in suffering is tied to our hope of the glory that will be revealed when Christ returns.

(See 2 Timothy 2:12; Romans 8:18)

Blessing rests on those who endure insults for the name of Jesus.

There is no honor in suffering for wrong-doing (v. 15).

There is no shame for suffering as a Christian. (v. 16)

Peter relates the persecution of the family of God to God's refining judgment. (v.17-18)

1:7, These have come so that your faith - of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire - may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Peter contrasts the judgment of God on Christians and his judgment on those who disobey.

Peter's concluding words from this section (v. 19):

See the hand of God in your suffering for his name.

Commit yourselves to your faithful Creator.

Continue to do good.

Questions for Table Conversation

1. Someone has said, "God doesn't care what you go through nearly as much as how you respond to what you go through." Do you think that statement is a true statement? What or why not?
2. How can suffering help us to become stronger for Christ?

3. Why do we need to be clear minded and self-controlled when we pray?
4. In what way is hospitality important in preparing us or sustaining us during difficult times?
5. Do you know what your spiritual gift is? How does your gift allow you to help others in difficult times?

Before the Next Session

Read 1 Peter 5:1-14 (once a day would be great) before our next session.

Use the following questions to assist you as you reflect on your reading:

1. What specific instructions did Peter give to the Elders of the church in Ephesus? Vv.1-4
2. What warning does Peter give about pride? v. 5
3. What promise is given to those who will humble themselves? V. 6
4. Why are Christians urged to be self-controlled and alert? v. 7
5. What example does Peter give to his readers about standing firm in the faith? v. 9
6. What is God's promise to those who experience suffering for the cause of Christ? v. 10-11
7. Who assisting Peter with the writing of this letter? v. 12.
8. Who sent greetings to the Christians in Ephesus? v. 13