

1 Peter

Week 8: Suffering as Christians

Scripture

1 Peter 4:12-19

Review

In the first 3 chapters, Peter has walked us through...

- **Living as chosen exiles** - a people marked by hope in suffering, holiness in conduct, and humility under authority
- **Being faithful witnesses in every area of life** - how we live under government, at work, in marriage, and even when we're wronged
- **Viewing suffering as meaningful** - it refines our faith and reveals Christ's character through us.

When we respond to suffering like Jesus, the world sees a Savior who still redeems the broken.

Motivation

Peter continues and refers yet again to trials and suffering

Helping believers to understand that we leave the old life behind in favor for our New Life in Christ.

We live out our faith in our actions.

Information

Trials are Inevitable

I Peter 4:12-16 (ESV) 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. **14** If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. **15** But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. **16** Yet if anyone

suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.

Peter returns at the end of the book to the metalworking imagery from Chapter 1

I Peter 1:6-7 (ESV) In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Peirasmos here means not the inner wrestling with evil inclination, but undeserved sufferings from outside the person who is distressed by them.

Peter was not denying that we face temptation from within, but he was addressing temptations from external sources, particularly.

Why are things tested? (In metal work, it can be called Proofing)

To determine what something is made of -

To remove unwanted impurities -

To determine quality -

To get a sense of their strength and durability -

When it comes to metal, when done properly, if you add more heat and pressure properly, often you can dramatically strengthen the metal, adding durability and toughness as well as removing brittleness and impurities.

It is not just metal. We find testing like this all over our lives: Furniture, clothes, food, chemicals, oxygen, water, athletes, musicians.

Develops these things. Shapes them.

So, in these verses, look what Paul emphatically tells us.

-Don't Be Surprised v. 12

-Don't Think It Strange v.12

-Don't Be Ashamed v.16

Our faith isn't tested because God doesn't know how much or what kind of faith we have. It is tested because we often are ignorant of how much or what kind of faith we have. God's purpose in testing is to display the enduring quality of our faith. - David Guzik

Paul helps us understand that it is about perspective. We must have the correct perspective (worldview). Our Worldview is the lens through which we look at, evaluate the world around us, the happenings in our lives, and those around us. Remember, we are called to have the godly perspective/worldview.

Unfortunately, for so many, trials, suffering, and difficulties are seen almost like God is picking on me. It can feel isolating. Lonely. But as our creator he know better than anyone how they will be used in our lives. He does not waste our trials.

Thankfully, the Bible has a lot to tell us about suffering, trials, and difficulty. Listen to James the Just aka James, the brother of Jesus...He understands that God does not waste anything.

James 1:2-4 (ESV) Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

We can only partake of Jesus' sufferings because He partook of our humanity and sufferings. He became a man and suffered so that our suffering wouldn't be meaningless. It is good to share anything with Jesus, even His suffering.

We should never deny the place of suffering in growing us in Christlikeness in our walk through life. Though there is much needless pain we bear through lack of knowledge or lack of faith, there is also necessary suffering. If suffering was a suitable tool to teach Jesus (**Hebrews 5:8-9** - 8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. 9 And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,)), it is a suitable tool to teach His servants.

Philippians 2:5-8 (ESV) Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Our example is Jesus.

Yes, trials are inevitable. But we are not alone. Trials are never wasted. They are not meaningless. We may not at the time fully grasp what God is doing, but he knows. God is doing his perfect work in us.

Peter also wants to make sure that these trials are not a result of our failure and sin. **4:15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler.**

Dave and his emails closed with scripture. Don't create problems for yourself. But as you are living and following Christ, they will come.

And here is where it gets difficult for me. Peter and James tie my trials and difficulties to Joy and Rejoicing. Sometimes joy and rejoicing is unbelievably difficult. So, how do I do this? How can I shift my perspective?

-Practice Gratitude - Such a need in our world today. A proper attitude.

-Remember, trials are a path to growth - God is at work (Maybe you feel like you should be a giant based on your trial). Can I just read a book or watch a video? **We don't choose what comes our way, but we can choose our attitude and focus!**

-Continue to pursue spiritual strength through prayer and God's Word. Guidance and answers are found in God's Word. Just read...and read...fill yourself (those hollow places) with God's truth.

CityAlight - His Glory and My Good

There is hope in every trial

For I can trust the Lord

He will turn my heart towards Him

And help me bear the thorn

So in faith, I follow Jesus

On the road not understood

For I know that He is working

For His glory and my good

To our God be the glory, to our God be praise

He alone, the name above all names

I will boast ever only in the Lord, my God

For I know His glory is my good

Finally, Peter closes, wanting us to have a Gospel-Centered and Eternal perspective on our trials.

Eternal Perspective on Trials

I Peter 4:17-19 (ESV) 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? Simplify: We're first in line. If it starts with us, think what it's going to be like for those who refuse God's Message! Then Peter quotes Proverbs 11:31 to repeat and reinforce what he just said. **18** And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"

What is Peter trying to say?

When it comes to suffering, Peter tells us that judgment begins with us... God's children or the household of God. Right now, God uses suffering as a judgment (in a positive, purifying sense) for Christians (the household of God).

It is right for judgment to begin at the house of God. "There is equity in it; for Christians profess to be better than others, and so they ought to be. They say they are regenerate, so they ought to be regenerate. They say that they are a holy people, separated unto Christ; so they ought to be holy, and separate from sinners, as he was." **Charles Haddon Spurgeon**

Now is our time of fiery trial (as we saw back in verse 12); the ungodly will have their fire later. The fire we endure now purifies us; the fire the ungodly will endure will punish them. Yet we always remember that there is never any punishment from God for us in our sufferings, only purification. For the Christian, the issue of punishment was settled once and for all at the cross, where Jesus endured all the punishment the Christian could ever face from God.

The old saying goes: The same fire that consumes straw will purify gold. The fire is the same, but its purpose in application is different, and its effect is different upon the straw and the gold. Even so, Christians do suffer some of the same things the ungodly do, yet the purpose of God is different and the effect is different.

We must have the proper perspective and tell our brothers and sisters!

Peter closes with...because of all these things

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

For His Glory is my Good!