

1 Peter 4 - 5

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Back in 3:18, Peter said of Christ that **“He suffered physical death, but He was raised to life in the Spirit.”** Now Peter returns to that truth.

(4:1) So then, since Christ suffered physical pain, you must arm yourselves with the same attitude He had, and be ready to suffer, too. For if you have suffered physically for Christ, you have finished with sin. (2) You won't spend the rest of your lives chasing your own desires, but you will be anxious to do the will of God.

A. Christ Led The Way In Suffering

Christ's suffering included **physical pain**. Believers need to have the same mindset and be ready to suffer if necessary. We are in a war with the devil and our **armaments** are in our **attitudes**. Focus on the purpose of **Christ** and make it yours.

B. One Advantage In Suffering

When a man **suffers** because he refuses to sin, he is no longer controlled by the **will** of the flesh.

Bruce Oberst describes this wonderfully:

Suffering, persecution, and trial provide no excuse for falling into sin. Rather, such times grant to us opportunity for spiritual growth and development. Watch that person who has learned how to keep a strong grip on the Savior in time of great stress and difficulty—observe him over the years—and you will also be observing one who is conquering sin.

For each believer, the guiding star is **to do the will of God** (a Christian lifestyle) instead of the lusts of men (a devil-led life style).

(3) You have had enough in the past of the evil things that godless people enjoy — their immorality and lust, their feasting and drunkenness and wild parties, and their terrible worship of idols.

A. The Past Lifestyle Is Over With

This description fits the gentile component of the church. That old pagan lifestyle included:

- **Misuse of sex:**

- **Immorality.** Marriage and sexual relations were created by the Lord for reproduction and pleasure. He has set boundaries and **immorality** is ignoring those boundaries.
- **Lust.** A word based in feelings. Doing what one **enjoys** without regard to God or His will.

Bathing suit contests are based in **lust**. Much advertising is propelled by **lust**. What does a scantily clad female have to do with selling a car battery? Yet an advertising piece shows the two together.

- **Abusing Social Activities:**

- **Feasting.** The Greek word has to do with an excess of wine and that leads to:
- **Drunkenness.** One under the influence of alcohol. They have temporarily lost their freedom of choice.
- **Wild parties.** The word degenerated to mean carousal, a band of drunken revelers, swaying and singing their way through the streets. Parties where intoxicating beverages are featured.

- **Worship of Idols:**

- **Terrible** idolatry. The **worship** of idols lowered personal standards and permitted them to engage in all sorts of sinful pleasures for which they have an appetite. This is why idolatrous religions breed sin and degradation.

(4) Of course, your former friends are surprised when you no longer plunge into the flood of wild and destructive things they do. So they slander you.

A. Friends Surprised

- These were **former friends**. The Faith may cause a break in friendships.
- **Plunge into the flood**. Like joining in a mad race.
- Peter points out that the former way of life led to **wild and destructive** goings on.

B. Slander Results

- People often feel resentment for anything that does not fit into their own pattern of life. The pagan judges the new believer. The outcome is **slander** toward the one who is different. Hate speech.

(5) But remember that they will have to face God, who will judge everyone, both the living and the dead.

- Life is for a few years and then comes the test. We have a body, but our spirit will one day be held accountable without the body. **God** will be the **judge** and He will bring justice to what now seems like an unjust situation. Your former friends have judged you, but God will **judge** everyone, including them.

(6) That is why the Good News was preached to those who are now dead — so although they were destined to die like all people, they now live forever with God in the Spirit.

- Peter speaks of believers **now dead**. They entered a new life before physical **death** and **now live forever with God**. See how believers pass through judgment.

(7) The end of the world is coming soon. Therefore, be earnest and disciplined in your prayers.

A. Translation Concern

- Of the translations that we consulted, only the *New Living Translation* says "**The end of the world is**

coming soon." Rather, "**The end of all things is near**" is chosen by most translators.

- Peter announced **the end of** all things is **coming soon**. He did not specify what was ending.

B. A Probable Solution

Bruce Oberst says in his *Letter from Peter* commentary that after studying every similar construction in Scripture, he points this one to the destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred just a few years after Peter's writing. Especially for Jewish believers, this event was extremely important because it was an anchor point in their worldview. This is a realistic solution.

C. Prayer is Required

- **Be earnest in prayer.** No quick **prayer** to get on to something else. No **prayers** from a scroll. No **prayers** when nearly exhausted.
- **Be disciplined in prayer.** Pick a plan and follow it. Make sure that it gets done each day. Perhaps Peter recalled the evening he was drowsy and fell asleep when Jesus had asked him to **pray**.
- The destruction of Jerusalem would especially concern the Jewish brethren in the churches. It was their national home base and perhaps they still had relatives living there. Jerusalem was a dominant subject in Isaiah and other later prophetic books.

(8) **Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins.**

- Peter has spoken of **love** earlier in this book and now returns to that theme. Their **love** for other believers is to be **deep, fervent** (*English Standard Version*). The word is used of the strenuous efforts of a horse racing at full gallop.
- **Love** is ready to forgive others quickly. It forgives again and again. It refuses to see the faults of others.

Bruce Oberst says:

That is, when love dominates a person's life and being, he is not a fault-finder or a crank. The constant practice of sin should certainly arrest our attention — whether in our life or in another's. But when love is the controlling force in our lives, we will not be looking for sins in our brothers' lives.

(9) Cheerfully share your home with those who need a meal or a place to stay.

- A remarkable case of **home sharing** is found in Acts 10:23. Peter broke with Jewish custom and invited three non-Jewish men to stay overnight.

So Peter invited the men to stay for the night. The next day he went with them, accompanied by some of the brothers from Joppa.

This was a step in reaching out to God-fearing Gentiles and baptizing them into Christ.

Cheerfully share. Having others in is added work and expense. Avoid complaining about it.

- Learning how to help the needy is a challenge on our parts. It takes some skill on the part of the believer both to be safe and not perpetuate a need in the hungry.

(10) God has given each of you a gift from His great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. (11) Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God Himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to Him forever and ever! Amen.

A. Believers Have Gifts

God has provided **gifts** to believers for serving other people. Perhaps Peter is implying that the hospitality just

mentioned is a **gift**. One person does not have all of the **gifts**, but Peter says that each person has **a gift**.

B. How To Utilize Your Gifts

- If your gift is **speaking**, speak like God is speaking through you. Do quality work. Identify and eliminate hindrances to good speaking such as using “aaaas.” It's work and takes time.
- If our **gift** is **helping** others, we should pursue it with the **energy that God supplies**. Being a minimalist is not allowed.
- The outcome of using our **gifts** is to bring **glory to God through Jesus Christ**.

(12) Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. (13) Instead, be very glad – for these trials make you partners with Christ in His suffering, so that you will have the wonderful joy of seeing His glory when it is revealed to all the world.

A. Your Experience Is Normal

The **fiery trials** are not **strange**. The Roman government had provided for the safety of believers during the time of the Book of Acts. Roman law saved Paul a number of times, allowing him a platform for preaching Christ to kings and men in authority.

Now the Roman policies were changing and Christians were being targeted for arrest and trial. Persecution was in many places in the Roman Empire.

B. How To View Your Experience

- Be glad. Just as Peter and the Apostles were glad when persecuted by Jewish officials, so these believers reading Peter's letter should look at persecution by the Roman government in the same way.

The others accepted his advice. They called in the apostles and had them flogged. Then they ordered them never again to speak in the

name of Jesus, and they let them go. The apostles left the high council rejoicing that God had counted them worthy to suffer disgrace for the name of Jesus. And every day, in the Temple and from house to house, they continued to teach and preach this message: "Jesus is the Messiah." Acts 5:40-42

- You will become **partners** with Christ and His **suffering**. **Christ** left heaven, came to earth and was rejected by His own countrymen and was crucified. We can **partner** with Jesus in His rejection and **suffering** as we experience persecution.
- You will have **joy** in seeing **His glory revealed**. While the crucifixion looked like a defeat from the human viewpoint, it was necessary to achieve victory. He is winning and the world will see His **glory**.

(14) So be happy when you are insulted for being a Christian, for then the glorious Spirit of God rests upon you. [On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.]

- **Happiness** is a choice. Do not count the **insults** of unbelievers as a disaster, but a source of **happiness**.
- **The Spirit rests on you**, arriving at our immersion into Christ. Acts 2:39. This may be an allusion to the presence of the Lord that filled the temple when it was dedicated:

The priests could not continue their service because of the cloud, for the glorious presence of the LORD filled the Temple of God.

2 Chronicles 5:14

- We don't know why the translators inserted brackets.

(15) If you suffer, however, it must not be for murder, stealing, making trouble, or prying into other people's affairs. (16) But it is no shame to suffer for being a Christian. Praise God for the privilege of being called by His name!

A. Reasons Not To Suffer

- Being a **murderer**. One person taking the life of another person is always against the law. Any nation's laws.
- **Stealing**. Stealing was simple in Peter's day. It has become incredibly sophisticated in our own time. Much **stealing** is done electronically. At the personal level, stealing using credit cards is common. A case within this writer's family surfaced just yesterday.
- **Making trouble**. This same Greek word was used by those intent on killing Jesus. John 18:30.
- **Prying into other people's** business. The Greek word here means *an inspector of another*. Inspecting other people is very big business now with huge databases of information about the health, finances, political views of others. In many homes, conversations are secretly recorded and kept in data-banks. One means of **prying** is using cell phones that send information without permission and another is Amazon's Alexa that records (and saves) everything that it can hear.

B. The No-Shame Reasons To Suffer

- Being A **Christian**. The name is not something to hide. Paul was not ashamed even though he was in jail.

So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord. And don't be ashamed of me, either, even though I'm in prison for Him. With the strength God gives you, be ready to suffer with me for the sake of the Good News. 1 Timothy 1:8

- Wearing the **Name** of the Lord. The name **Christian** points to Christ, the Messiah. This new **name** had

been given to all believers once the church included Gentiles. It fulfilled a prophecy.

The nations will see your righteousness. World leaders will be blinded by your glory. And you will be given a new name by the LORD's own mouth. Isaiah 62:2

(17) For the time has come for judgment, and it must begin with God's household. And if judgment begins with us, what terrible fate awaits those who have never obeyed God's Good News? (18) And also, "If the righteous are barely saved, what will happen to godless sinners?" (19) So if you are suffering in a manner that pleases God, keep on doing what is right, and trust your lives to the God who created you, for He will never fail you.

A. Judgment Time Is Coming

Judgment **begins** at the household of God, the church. Peter quotes a Proverb:

If the righteous are rewarded here on earth, what will happen to wicked sinners? Proverbs 11:31

Those who have not obeyed (he didn't say just believed) the **Good News** will have a **terrible fate**. Because sinners are in charge now, there are some terrible injustices to believers, but that will be corrected at God's judgment time.

B. Trust God For A Successful Outcome

(5:1) And now, a word to you who are elders in the churches. I, too, am an elder and a witness to the sufferings of Christ. And I, too, will share in His glory when He is revealed to the whole world. As a fellow elder, I appeal to you: (2) Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly — not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God.

A. Words for Church Elders

- **Elders** are local while being an apostle (like Peter) was universal among the churches. **Elders** are selected by the church, based now, on written qualifications in Scripture. At that time, the choice may have been guided by prophets.
- Peter is an **elder** and saw **Christ** crucified. There were probably very few eye-witnesses left by the time this book was penned. He intends to share in **Christ's glory** when He comes.
- **Care for the flock entrusted to you.** Pay attention to those being led away by the enticements of sin or the smooth talk of false teachers. Being an **elder** is not just an honorary title in the Lord's church.
- **Watch willingly**, not just for a reward.

(3) Don't lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example. (4) And when the Great Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of never-ending glory and honor.

- Avoid **lording** it over **people** in your care. Jesus was a servant-leader.
- Be a **good example**. Lording it over the flock—domineering—was forbidden. Rather than ruling with an iron hand, the elder is to lead primarily by **example**. The elder should be one who so lives in his everyday life that he provides a pattern for imitation to the members of the congregation. In Scripture, the authority of the elders is in the group collectively.
- Elders will receive a **crown of endless glory and honor**.

(5) In the same way, you younger men must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you, serve each other in humility, for "God opposes the proud but favors the humble."

- Accept the authority of the **elders**. Each younger generation faces the temptation of wanting to rebel against the authority of those older.
- Serve each other in **humility**. **God** favors the **humble**. Peter's quotation comes from Proverbs 3:34.
- **James Smith** says, "God is in the business of chopping down proud men and giving grace (special blessing) to the humble."

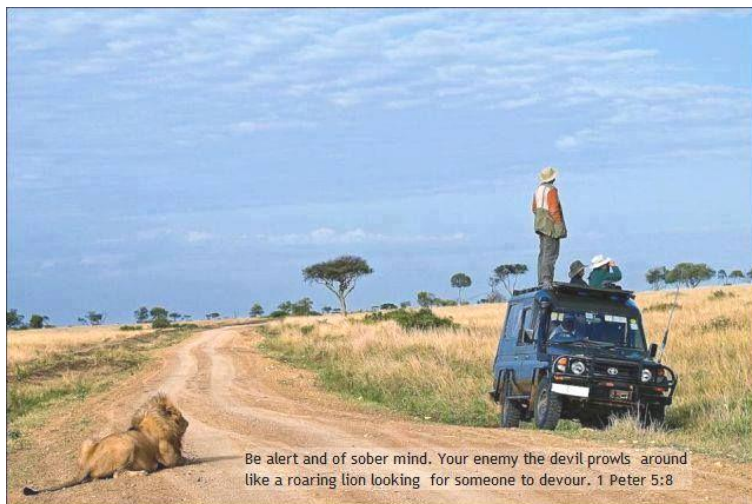
(6) So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time He will lift you up in honor. (7) Give all your worries and cares to God, for He cares about you.

- Given the subject of Peter's book, humbling yourselves may mean to accept the humiliation and persecution that may come your way. Don't worry about it. God cares for you. And He will exalt you when it is time.

(8) Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.

Among this writer's favorite photos:

The hunters are searching for prey. Their focus is out in the distance. The **lion** is already crouched, ready to spring.



Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 1 Peter 5:8

(9) Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your Christian brothers and sisters all over the world are going through the same kind of suffering you are.

- You are not the only believers **suffering**. It is going on in other places.

(10) In His kindness God called you to share in His eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus. So after you have suffered a little while, He will restore, support, and strengthen you, and He will place you on a firm foundation. (11) All power to Him forever! Amen.

- It is God's **kindness** that has made salvation possible and there are better days ahead. During those better days on the other side of Judgment, God will **restore**, **support**, and **strengthen you**.

(12) I have written and sent this short letter to you with the help of Silas, whom I commend to you as a faithful brother. My purpose in writing is to encourage you and assure you that what you are experiencing is truly part of God's grace for you. Stand firm in this grace.

- This is probably the same **Silas** who traveled with Paul in Acts 16-18. He was secretary for Peter in **writing** this book.

(13) Your sister church here in Babylon sends you greetings, and so does my son Mark.

- This is literal **Babylon** in Mesopotamia. There was a Jewish community there.
- **My son Mark** shows the close relationship between Peter and Mark. Peter may have been instrumental in leading Mark to Christ. There is good internal evidence that the Gospel of Mark is largely the inspired recollections of Peter.

(14) Greet each other with Christian love. Peace be with all of you who are in Christ.