

When a Christian Suffers for Doing Right

Principles to live by when doing the right thing results in suffering

Introduction: Priming the pump for tonight's discussion.

- Let's begin with our own observations. Was there a moment where God spoke to you, showed you something new, or reminded you of a familiar truth through the message this week?

Exploration: Questions to guide our group discussion.

1. In our focal text this week, Peter began by reminding us that if we will live a good and godly life (one of submission and not rebellion) that we will generally be blessed with good outcomes. On the other hand, he closes our reading this week by noting that it is better to suffer for doing good than evil. Sometimes, we bring suffering on ourselves through foolish acts of the flesh...but suffering can also come from the evil acts of others. Has there ever been a time in your life when you have suffered at the hands of an evildoer although you had done what you thought was right before God? What did that look like in your situation?
2. Peter gave us five responses when suffering results from doing right. Which of these responses resonated with you the most, and why? Did God show you anything new in these responses that spoke to your own situation? Here's a summary of the five responses to jog your memory.
 - a. Receive God's rewards for good, even if we suffer from men for doing right.
 - b. Stay calm and don't let the threats of the wicked stress you out.
 - c. Set your heart on God and don't make room for fear or anxiety.
 - d. Let your reaction to suffering be a witness that points people to Jesus.
 - e. Live a life that would contradict your accusers and discredit their accusations.
3. Jesus stands out as an example to us of how to react to suffering. His passion also reminds us that God can use our suffering to accomplish His divine purposes. God may allow you to experience suffering as a part of His divine plan for accomplishing His purposes through you. With our Savior as an example, let's discuss how God can use suffering to accomplish things that He couldn't otherwise accomplish in and through us.
4. BONUS: As a bonus question for our group discussion this week, we noted that there are multiple views on the meaning of verses 19-20. Some believe that after the crucifixion, Jesus went into Hades and preached the gospel to those humans who died before the time of the cross. Others believe that this refers to the gospel of deliverance

being preached through Noah, which was ignored by those who perished. Still some believe that after the cross, Jesus preached to demon spirits (not humans) in captivity and declared their judgment in the spiritual realm. Just for fun, and being mindful that good believers have differing points of view on this issue, how do you lean on interpreting these verses, and why? Remember to have grace...it's not crystal clear in scripture.

Additional Scriptures for Deeper Study:

- Genesis 50:19-21
- Romans 8:18-39
- James 1:13-17

Application: How can I apply this to my life this week?

- If you are currently suffering for doing good, what encouragement has the Lord given to you so that you can press into it and glorify God through it? Is there something about this that you could share with the group?
- As you think back on times of previous suffering, were there times that you brought suffering upon yourself, versus times that you suffered for doing good? What did you learn from both of these experiences?