

STANDING FIRM: Fiery Ordeals
Andy Deane · 7/7/2024 · 1 Peter 4:12-19

God protects & purifies you, when in the midst of suffering, you entrust your soul to His care, for safe keeping. To help us better do that, let's look at the attitudes, reasons and responses that we should have in our suffering.

OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD SUFFERING

1 Peter 4:12-13, 12 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

- Expect it:
 - It's a normal part of life, and while it's not our end of the story, it's an essential part of it.
 - 2 Timothy 3:12, *In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.*
- Examine it:
 - Sincerity: 1 Peter 1:7, *...so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus...is revealed.*
 - Character: James 1:3-4, *...the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature/complete, not lacking...*
 - Discipline: Psalms 119:71, *It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees.*
- Enjoy it:
 - While there can be benefits to all types of suffering, joy is promised when I share *the sufferings of Christ*.
 - We rejoice because we know that our suffering and faith will pay off *when his glory is revealed*.

OUR REASON FOR SUFFERING

1 Peter 4:14-15, 14 If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 15 If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler.

- Righteous (undeserved suffering):
 - What are some modern reasons we may be *insulted because of the name of Christ*?
 - Christian views on marriage, life in the womb, the creation of the world, the Bible, and who Jesus is.
 - Christian actions like praying in public, abstaining from sin, speaking the truth in love, etc.
 - When we suffer for Christ, God promises to bless us with His presence (*God rests on you*).
 - Isaiah 43:2, *When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.*
 - Romans 8:35-39, *35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
- Unrighteous (deserved suffering):
 - When we suffer from our own sinful actions that is not persecution. We need to own it and not blame God.
 - Perhaps this list of sins to avoid were temptations for those being persecuted.

OUR RESPONSE TO SUFFERING

1 Peter 4:16-19, 16 However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. 17 For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 And, "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" 19 So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

• **Be unashamed:**

- It's embarrassing to be insulted and mistreated for the gospel, so we must remember God is pleased with us.
- Romans 1:16, *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.*

• **Praise God:**

- Suffering rightly can mean you're on the narrow path. It really should be a part of every believer's experience.
- John 15:18-20, *18 "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. 19 If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. 20 Remember what I told you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.*
- Peter quote Proverbs 11:31. What does he mean that "*it is hard for the righteous to be saved*"?
 - He does not mean that we earn salvation through hard work, but that discipleship challenges us to do that hard work of casting away our idols and our sins.
 - "Now is our time of fiery trial. the ungodly will have their fire later. The fire we endure now purifies us; the fire the ungodly will endure will punish them. Remember 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. Christians can rejoice that the sufferings they face in this life are the worst they will ever face throughout all eternity. We have seen the worst; those who reject Jesus Christ have seen the best of life their eternal existence will ever see." — David Guzik

• **Entrust God:**

- The word commit is a technical word used in that time for when you would entrust your money to a trusted friend to keep it safe while you went on a journey.
- The idea is that we can commit our soul to God and He will not fail us.
- Jesus uses this in Luke 23:46, *Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."*

• **Do good works:**

- When we suffer while doing good, we can become discouraged.
- God will not forget our good works. He'll use them! The lost need us to do good to reduce pain & reveal God!

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