

Suffering In Christian Life (1 Peter 4)

by James Jennings

This sermon focuses on the importance of enduring suffering as a Christian, highlighting the need to rejoice in trials, not be surprised or depressed, and to trust in God's faithfulness. The passage from 1 Peter 4:12-19 is explored, emphasizing the testing of faith, the sharing in Christ's sufferings, and the future glory to be revealed. The sermon encourages believers to endure trials with joy, not to be ashamed of suffering for Christ, and to entrust their souls to God while doing good.

Scripture: Job 2:7, Luke 21:12, Proverbs 11:31, 2 Corinthians 4:17, Hebrews 9:28, Revelation 7:17

Topics: "Endurance in Suffering", "Joy in Trials"

Description

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Transcript

Father, Lord, what a reminder that ultimately our lives are lived before an audience of one. Or there could be 300 in here or none. But Lord, ultimately, You are always and ever before us.

Or Lord, we're ultimately before You. Lord, You see everything. And Father, I want to be pleasing to You right now, Lord.

Lord, I want to honor You with what I'm seeking to bring out of Your Word. Lord, I want this to be an encouragement to the saints. I want it to be a challenge to them and exhortation to them.

Lord, I want it to be a help and encouragement to the three seated before me and those on the live stream. But Lord, ultimately, I want to honor You. Lord, I want to leave this building today having been pleasing in Your sight.

Lord, that's my desire. And so Lord, I pray, Father, You would help me to say what I need to say from this text. And so Lord, would You put a guard over the door of my lips? Lord, would You be with the door of my lips? And Father, I just pray that You'd give me some of Your Holy Spirit.

Lord, give me more. You've already given us Your Spirit. Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

But Lord, I'm asking for a quickening from You that You would be with my mind. That You'd help me to proclaim Your Word. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Okay, turn to 1 Peter 4. I want to speak on how we should suffer as a Christian or the Christian in suffering. And the text that we're going to look at was referred to in that psalm, How Firm a Foundation. That phrase there, fiery trials, Peter uses that here in chapter 4. And as you're turning to 1 Peter, I'm just going to read a quick verse from 2 Peter.

Listen to what Peter says here. He says, now the second letter that I'm writing to you, so this is 1 Peter, 2 Peter, and then he says this, the reason behind these two letters. In both of them, I'm stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder.

So Peter is giving reminders. The Lord Jesus taught on many of the exact and specific things that Peter now deals with. The Apostle Paul had already taught on some of these very specific things.

And so Peter in a way, it's like the person who's got this real crowded desk and they've got all these sticky note reminders, and some of them have just been buried. And Peter, I believe in view of a certain suffering that's about to take place, he's taking some of those sticky notes that are buried and he's sticking them right on your monitor. And he's saying I want this to be before you right now.

So why did he write these two letters? Stirring up what? The mind. So much of the Christian life and how we go through suffering is that we're thinking correctly about the situation that we're in. The Bible deals with how do you think? How do you process in your mind what you are going through? So let's read 1 Peter 4, verses 12 to 19.

Now, I'm thinking here, what I want to do as I read this is I want to briefly comment and define some of these words. Because we're not going to have time to go look at everything. You could preach five sermons from these verses.

You could preach six sermons from these verses. And I want to just briefly comment after I might read a word or a phrase, I'm just going to give you an idea of what I think Peter's referring to and what he's trying to bring to our minds. So, verse 12.

First word. Beloved. Let's stop there just for a second.

If you remember, Tim did a sermon on those who are greatly beloved. What does it mean to be beloved? To be beloved means those loved by God, people whom God has His sights set on. So Peter says those people who God has His sights set on.

That's the type of people he's speaking to here. God has His eyes set on these individuals. Beloved, those whom God has His sights set on, do not be surprised at the fiery trial.

At the refining trial. When it... notice he says not be surprised at the fiery. He doesn't say don't be surprised at fiery trials.

He says at the fiery trial when it. So Peter might be referring to a specific trial that's going to come to these believers in his day. Don't be surprised when it comes upon you and here a purpose of a trial is to test you.

To test your genuineness of your faith. Don't be surprised as though something strange or unusual were happening to you. So the believer, as you're being tested, this isn't strange.

It's not strange that you're having a fiery, purifying trial come upon you. But rather, what should we do? Rather than view it strange, he says we should rejoice. We should not be depressed.

But we should rejoice insofar or to the extent as you share Christ's sufferings. So that is we are suffering on behalf of the same cause which Christ patiently endured. We're suffering on that exact same cause.

We're sharing in Christ's sufferings. That you may. So rejoice that something will happen.

That you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed. So Peter's thinking you're rejoicing right now in this present trial. And it's ultimately leading to you rejoicing at the coming of Christ and at glory.

And that day when all mourning and trials are going to pass away, you'll be glad when His glory is revealed. So the Christian in suffering is looking to their final salvation. To see Christ face to face.

To have direct communion with Him. Peter goes on. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, not insulted for being a fool, but for the name of Christ, you are blessed.

You're happy. Why? Why should I be blessed? Because the Spirit of glory and of God rest upon you. Wait, what? I'm going to be happy because the Spirit of glory and of God rest upon you? Meaning, Peter means, you're suffering for being like Christ.

And you're like Christ because the Holy Spirit's presence and power is upon your life and helping you. What believer would not want that? And that happens in the middle of a trial. God draws near.

But, in contrast to those who are suffering for righteousness' sake, Peter says don't let any of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer. That term, evildoer, covers all types of sin. And look at the next thing he says.

Let none of you suffer as a what? A meddler? Wait, wait. Murderer? Meddler. Two M-words there.

Far extremes, you could say. Don't suffer as a meddler, a busybody in other people's affairs? Meaning, you could get involved in someone else's affairs and they start hating you for it. And you might want to say I'm suffering for righteousness' sake.

But no, you were wrong to be meddling in that business which was not yours. You're not being persecuted for righteousness' sake. You're overstepping your bounds.

Peter goes on. Yet, the word but is the idea there, but if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed. Don't be embarrassed.

What disformities the trial might bring in your life. Or something the world might mock. Don't be ashamed, Peter says.

But, in contrast to feeling ashamed, what should you do? You should glorify God. You should be praising the Lord. And then he says this phrase, in that name, praising the Lord, and the Holman Christian renders it in a way that really captures the idea, in that name, for bearing the name of Christ.

I shouldn't be embarrassed. I should be praising God that I even have the privilege of bearing the name of Christian, which he just mentioned earlier. If anyone suffers as a Christian, some versions put that in quotes.

We're called Christians. That's the name. The name of a Christ follower.

And then he says, bearing the name of Christian, so we shouldn't be ashamed as we suffer as a believer. And then he mentions this phrase. For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God.

And if it begins with us. Now, let's just think for a moment that word judgment. Diego had a text in his Sunday school hour that had the word judgment there.

It had it four times. That word judgment in 1 Corinthians 11 is not referring to the final judgment. It was referring to this trial, this suffering, this punishment that was going to come upon them for wrongly taking the Lord's Supper.

And so I believe that when he says here, for it's time for judgment, he's just talking about the fiery trial that he was mentioning in v. 12. Not an eternal judgment. It's time for this fiery trial to come and that's going to judge and determine your true character.

That's the idea. It's going to judge your character. It's going to prove what's true of you.

It's about time for this to begin at the household of God. And if the fiery trial, the judgment, begins with us, the Christians, some might then be wondering what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the Gospel of God? What's going to be the outcome of those who fall away? What's going to be the outcome of those who are lost? And then, Peter, he restates the same point by quoting Proverbs 11:31. And he changes some of Proverbs 11:31. He says, and if the righteous, that's the Christian, is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner? And Proverbs 11 says if the righteous is repaid on earth. If the righteous is repaid on earth.

Some versions render it if the righteous not is scarcely saved, but is saved with much difficulty. The idea here is not that there's few Christians that are going to be saved. The idea here is Christians are saved with much difficulty.

It's hard. Jesus said the way is hard that leads to life. It says in Acts 27, what difficulty, that's the word scarcely, the boat arrived.

It was hard to get the boat to the island. It was difficult. So if the righteous with much difficulty in this life suffers, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner? That's the question he just asked.

What will be the outcome of those who do not obey the Gospel? And the simple point there is this. If God allows those who He loves and has His eyes set on to suffer as much as we do in this life, the lost people should look at our sufferings as a Christian and realize, wow, what I have coming as a lost person, the fires of hell, they're going to be so much more severe when what these Christians whom God loves are going through in the present life. They're going to have it coming in a very, very fierce way.

And then, he's got the last verse here, verse 19. I'm doing this running commentary. Verse 19, Therefore, because the path to heaven is difficult, and the damnation of those who reject Christ is terrifying, and future glory is incredible, let those who suffer according to God's will, meaning it's God's will that you're suffering, or it means you want to suffer in a way that honors God and you are fulfilling His will in the midst of your suffering.

And then he says, suffer according to God's will. Entrust their souls. That's what we do in the midst of a trial.

We entrust our soul to a faithful Creator. Faithful meaning God keeps His Word or meaning, why does he say Creator there? Faithful meaning God keeps His Word. Creator meaning who created you? God did.

I mean, you're God's creation and He's allowing you to be refined by going through a trial. He's going to take care of you. And what do we do in the midst of a trial? He says, you do good.

While doing good, you're trusting the Lord who's faithful. You're trusting Him with the fiery trial and you're seeking to do good. So, sorry if that was a little on there, but I wanted to just kind of define some of these things in the passage because we're not going to get to all of it.

But Peter in a way is showing us how a Christian should suffer. He's given us some do-nots and some things to do. And one other passage I want to read at the start of 1 Peter.

He says this in v. 4. He mentions this inheritance that's coming that's kept in heaven. And then he says in v. 5, who by God's power were being guarded through faith for salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. And then he says in this, the salvation that's going to be revealed.

That's being kept in heaven. You rejoice. You rejoice in what's to come.

You're looking to your future joy. Though for a little while, so in God's economy of time, we're just here a little while. The suffering's for a little bit.

If necessary, so suffering is necessary, you have been grieved. So we rejoice in trials, and yet we're grieved in trials by various trials. What a way Peter puts it.

Various trials. Why is this happening? 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 the praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. The idea is at final salvation.

So Peter starts the letter saying some of these very similar ideas. He's thinking about final salvation. He's thinking about Christ coming back.

He's thinking about us needing to be refined in order that we might keep enduring in this race that we're in. So, you can think about it like this. Peter in a way is like a teacher in this passage, and he's telling the class this.

He's saying, class, an intense and difficult trial is coming. Here's how you need to answer and respond to the test. Don't be surprised.

It's not going to be strange that you're going to face this test. Don't be depressed, but rejoice. Rejoice in what? He says, rejoice that you're sharing in Christ's sufferings here.

This is only going to lead you to share in fellowship with Him at final salvation. Then the teacher, he changes gears. And he says, don't suffer because of cheating.

He warns them. There's a way you can suffer that's wrong. And don't be ashamed of those who mock you in the midst of your suffering.

That would be wrong. Don't respond like that. And then he turns and he says something else.

He says it's time for the test to begin. And professing Christians, it will begin with you. And then, he says right there in v. 17, he says what the outcome is going to be.

What will the outcome be? He doesn't directly answer the question, but it's implied. What's the outcome going to be? It's going to be difficult for the Christian. Scarcely saved.

With much difficulty, that ship to heaven is going to reach its shore. It's not going to be a breeze. There's going to be all sorts of things trying to get us to shipwreck.

And then he says what the outcome is of the lost. It's implied. They're going to have far worse suffering in hell.

If God lets us, whom are beloved, have a fiery trial, what's going to happen to the lost? And then the teacher, he reminds the class, he says because of this difficulty, don't be overwhelmed. You have a faithful Creator who made you and trust your soul to Him and go and do good. So, I guess that's kind of my introduction.

Now, I want to ask this question. He says, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it... Now, we can't necessarily know for certain what Peter's referring to, but what might Peter be referring to? And he's saying this as a reminder, meaning someone else in the past already reminded them of something that was going to happen. Let's turn briefly to Luke 21.

Luke 21. There's some verbiage there very similar. It's Christ had warned already.

Christ had already warned that there before the destruction of Jerusalem, that Christians there are going to suffer great persecution. I mean, it's going to be a fiery trial that's going to come upon them. And so, some commentators would say Peter's referring to that specific trial that's about to come for the believers.

Whether that's right or not, I think it's helpful for us to look at some of these things that those Christians went through. Because they'll help us even think more and more what a fiery trial is. So Luke 21, verse 11, he just talked about great earthquakes, famines, pestilence, terrors and great signs from heaven.

Verse 12, but before all of this, they will lay their hands on you, they will persecute you, and they will deliver you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for My namesake. Remember, we're bearing the name of a Christian. Verse 13, this will be your opportunity to bear witness.

You want to talk about doing good while you're suffering? Bear witness. Settle it then in your minds. So again, Jesus Himself is thinking about how do you think? Not to meditate before how to answer, for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict.

You want to talk about the Holy Spirit? The Spirit of God coming upon a person in the midst of a trial and being near to them? Those people were experiencing that reality right there in v. 15. Verse 16, you will be delivered up even by parents. So some of people's parents are going to take them and turn them into the government and have them killed.

And brothers and relatives and friends, and some of them they will put to death. Verse 17, you will be hated by all for My namesake, but not a hair of your head will perish. He obviously doesn't mean that

literally.

Verse 19, by your endurance, you will gain your lives. And then he goes on in v. 34, but watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. Meaning you get surprised by it.

For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the earth, but stay awake at all times praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place and to stand before the Son of Man. So some would say that this is what Peter, what fiery trial Peter is referring to was going to happen when he wrote this letter in the near future. Whether they're right or not, that's a pretty fiery trial.

That would refine you greatly. That would test you greatly to have your own parents deliver you up to have you killed. And he says there, you'll be hated by all for My name's sake, and he says in v. 19, by your endurance, you will gain your lives.

That's the same idea Peter says. The righteous is scarcely going to be saved. It's with difficulty that they're going to endure and get that ship to Canaan's coast.

It's not going to be easy the way it's hard that leads to life, Jesus says. And Jesus didn't want us to have it come upon us suddenly like a trap. And Peter doesn't want us to have trials come upon us suddenly like a trap.

Think about that command there. Do not be surprised. That's what not to do when it comes to trials.

Don't be surprised that God allows His Beloved to suffer. Suffering is not strange. It's not an unusual thing for believers.

There's false prophets right now who are saying things like, well, Christians are God's people. There's no way any of them are going to get the coronavirus. You don't have any verse that teaches that.

The prosperity Gospel says we're going to not have to suffer like the lost world. The Bible doesn't say that. The Bible actually points to the lost world having their ultimate suffering in hell.

When we're free of that, our suffering is in this life. We're not going to have it in the life to come. So don't be... Think about this.

God allows us to suffer. God who has infinite wisdom, who has the ability to stop you from going through the trial you're in, chooses not to stop you because He has a greater purpose involved in your sanctification in the midst of the trial that's testing the genuineness of your faith. He could stop it.

His eyes of love are set on you and He does not stop it. You can see why some Christians might be surprised. They read a verse on the love of God, and then they read a verse about we're going to suffer and through much tribulation we're going to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

And someone might say, well, God's contradicting Himself. He's not. We need the suffering.

It's required that we go and suffer. It's been granted not only that we believe, but we also suffer. So God could prevent it.

He does not. We should expect trials are going to become. Think of this.

Surprise is a tactic of the enemy. You just look at world history. What happened at Pearl Harbor? It was a surprise attack.

And America was caught off guard. They were not expecting all of those planes. And Peter is saying you don't want to be surprised at trials.

You just want to expect trials. You want to expect that there's going to be bombers that are going to fly over and drop bombs, and your life isn't just going to be one of peace and a field of nice roses. There's going to be trials.

There's going to be suffering. And they're not strange, he says. The word strange, the idea is they're not hard to understand.

That's what that word means. It's not hard to understand. But sometimes for us, it is hard to understand.

We're tempted to say, why? Why, Lord? Well, Peter's already given us a reason. This is going to refine you. This is going to test the genuineness of your faith.

They're not strange. They're not strange. So should we live in fear of a surprise? No.

We shouldn't live in a fear of a surprise because Peter's letting us know it's no longer a surprise. You shouldn't be surprised. So you don't live in fear of a surprise because whatever comes is no longer a surprise.

It's not an expected guest. At some point, the guest of suffering, whether in a minor degree or a major degree, it's going to come and it's going to knock on all of our doors. And we're going to have to open that door and not be aghast, not be surprised, not look at this and say, well, that's really strange.

Who invited this guest over to my house? Or to open that door and realize this is from my Heavenly Father who loves me. And I'm going to rejoice in this trial knowing ultimately there's a day I'm going to rejoice with final salvation and there will be no more tears, no more suffering. So don't let the anticipation of a fiery trial paralyze you.

That's not Peter's point. So, if we want to be purified, we should want trials. Now, the second thing, he says, don't be surprised.

And then in a way, he says, don't be depressed. Where do I get that? Verse 13, but rejoice. We're saying it in the other way, don't be depressed.

Don't be cast down and depressed when you suffer. Rejoice. Rejoice at what? At being worthy to suffer on behalf of the same cause Christ suffered.

Rejoice to the extent that you share Christ's sufferings. That in the future, you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed. So one of the evidences you're a Christian is you rejoice.

Those who say they're Christians and they cannot find at all any ability to thank God for the trial. They have no thankfulness, no joy of trusting the Lord. That just shows a heart of unbelief.

So Peter here, he says rejoice that you get to share in any aspect of Christ's sufferings, which were far greater. You know, our heads suffered the worst. Us as other members of His body, we suffer far less

significant trials than that wrath of almighty God that Christ bore on that cross.

Paul says in Philippians 4, rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I say rejoice. So we're to rejoice when we face a trial.

We're to have joy at the fact that this is actually purifying me and making me more like Christ. At the fact that this is actually a foretaste of the future joy that's going to come. Rejoice at the fact that He even says a little later, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

Imagine the joy of those believers who had to stand before the rulers in Luke 21 and they did not prepare beforehand what to say. And in that moment, God came upon them and gave them what to say. I mean, who wouldn't want to be experiencing that? The nearness and help of God in that trial.

I would want that. Even if you're suffering, you leave that and it's like the Lord helped us. And you say, like they did in Acts 4.31 I believe it is, they left after they were beaten, they left the council rejoicing that they were found worthy to suffer for the name of Christ.

They viewed their trial of suffering as something that God found them worthy to endure the trial and to not shame Him in the midst of that trial. And they praised Him for that. That should be how we view it.

So, we shouldn't be depressed. And then He says right there in verse 13, but rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings that you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed. If you read 1 Peter, if you read 2 Peter, you find this idea, it keeps coming up about His glory being revealed, about subsequent glories, about the day of eternity.

Peter is so often bringing the future into the mind of the Christian. He's wanting the Christian to be thinking about the future. And we obviously see that in Paul's life.

Paul was the type of man who said to depart and be with Christ is far better. I mean, Paul was so much thinking about the future, it's kind of like waiting for his flight to leave and he's just wondering when's my ticket going to be scheduled so I can go and depart and be with Christ. It's like he's looking, I'm quarantined on earth here.

I want to get out of this fallen world and I want to get to those perfections. He says this in chapter 1. I think I already read that verse, but the way he says it, he says you're to set your hope fully. What is it? 1.13? Therefore, prepare your minds for action.

Be sober-minded. Set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. I mean, there's different takes on that verse, but I would say he keeps bringing up this revelation.

He's just meaning the revealing of Christ. There's a day when Christ is going to be revealed from heaven and it's all going to be over and Christians are to think about that day. They are to look forward to that day.

The writer of Hebrews 9, he describes Christians are those who are eagerly awaiting the return of the Lord. Christ will come back to save those who are eagerly awaiting Him. One description of a Christian is someone who's eagerly awaiting the Lord.

That's what Hebrews 9.28 says. The Christian is someone eagerly awaiting the Lord. Peter describes Christians as sojourners and exiles.

See, we're not at home. We're awaiting our flight and we're stuck somewhere. This future hope that shows that the Christian's desire is they just want Christ.

We want to know Christ more. We want to be with Christ. That's the desire of the Christian.

Paul says to Titus something similar. We're waiting for our blessed hope. The appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior.

The Bible constantly says Christians are in the period of waiting. We're waiting. We're waiting for Christ to come.

And this was written a long time ago. And we're still in this period of waiting. And we get to taste some of that joy as we suffer and rejoice in the midst of our sufferings that we might rejoice when His glory is revealed.

When that day comes, we're going to have the greatest amount of joy and we're going to have no more suffering. Paul says we'll always be with the Lord. That's what the Christian wants.

He says in 2 Corinthians 4, this light, momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison. So the present fellowship you have with Christ in His sufferings now is only leading you to future fellowship in Paradise in which there will be no more mourning. Peter says in 2 Peter that we are waiting according to His promises.

We're waiting for a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Revelation 7, for the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their Shepherd, and He will guide them to the springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. So Peter wants this future appearing of Christ to be in our minds as we go into suffering.

He wants you thinking about it as you go into the suffering. Because then you conclude with Paul this is just a slight, momentary affliction. Or as Peter started his letter, if necessary, to suffer for a little while.

Oh, I'm in the suffering for so long. According to the Lord, it's a little while. This is such a heavy suffering.

Light suffering. And this is people who had their parents or had their parents take them, turn them over to the government to be killed. We're not experiencing that.

Obviously, again, the point of me even bringing this message right now is not for people to think, wow, we're really facing a fiery trial with the coronavirus. That's not the idea. We shouldn't be surprised at calamities and trials like we're facing.

But this is no sense some degree of a fiery trial. We're not having Christians being killed. We're not having massive suffering for the sake of righteousness right now as a church.

That's not what we're facing. And so, if we can't even run with the footmen of what we're facing right now, how are we going to run with the horses? The greater trial, the faster trial when it comes. Whatever that might be, whatever that might look like.

So, Peter, he says, do not be surprised. It's not strange. You shouldn't be depressed.

You should rejoice now and ultimately look to the future when you will rejoice then. And I already hit on this, but in verse 14, it's an incredible thought. If you're insulted for the name of Christ, so for being a Christian, you are blessed, you're happy.

And then he gives the reason. Why am I happy? Because the Spirit of glory and of God rest upon you. If I am insulted for the name of Christ, that indicates Christ has actually been helping me to even respond in a righteous way to be in the place to even be insulted to begin with.

And that's something to thank the Lord. That Lord, You helped me to respond correctly that I would even be insulted and found worthy to suffer for Your name. And then he says here, the Spirit of power or of glory and of God rest upon you.

I think that's the idea you see in Luke 21. There's a sense that the Holy Spirit is upon that person. There is a greater assurance in the midst of the fire and the trial because God is near them.

God is upon them. God is helping them in the midst of that trial. And that's one of the reasons so many Christians when they come out of the season of trials, they kind of want to go back because they want that nearness from the Spirit of power and of glory that was resting upon them.

And so there's this sense that you're rejoicing in the midst of a trial because you have God's help and you're actually having His power to respond in a Christian way as you suffer. And so, Peter says you should rejoice in that. That's something to thank God for that He is helping you in that in such a marvelous way.

So what believer would not feel it a great blessing to have such power and assurance upon them? We should desire that. And then I already mentioned this a little bit, verse 16, he says if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed. So Peter says don't be ashamed.

Don't be ashamed. I was trying to think, why would someone be ashamed? Here's one example that came up last night. You've got a Christian person who is standing firm in their faith.

And because of that, a lost spouse decides to divorce them. And they don't compromise on their stand for Christ. They could feel a little ashamed about what's going on in their life and they could be a divorced person.

They could feel shame and embarrassed. And Peter is saying don't be ashamed. You should rather be thankful that you've honored the Lord even though you're suffering because of it, you should be able to rejoice and thank the Lord.

There's nothing embarrassing about something happening because you stood for Christ. You should rather praise the Lord that you've not compromised. And then he says you shouldn't be ashamed.

You should do what? You should let Him glorify God in that name or for the fact that you're bearing the name of Christian. You should be praising the Lord that you even have the privilege to bear the name of Christian. You're wearing a badge of honor as a believer that the world can mock you all day long.

It will not take away the honor that you will have before the Lord when the glory of Jesus Christ is revealed. The world cannot take away the honor that matters most. They can't steal it.

They can't take it away. Like they said in Acts, we're worthy to suffer. We're worthy.

John Brown says this, it is not becoming that Christ should lead through rugged, thorny ways and we pass about to get away through flowery meadows. It is a sweet, joyful thing to be a sharer with Christ in anything. I mean, just sharing anything with Jesus Christ.

To share and bear His name is incredible. The privilege to be worthy to share His sufferings, that's amazing. He says it's a sweet and joyful thing to be a sharer with Christ in anything, all enjoyments wherein He is not are bitter to the soul.

Meaning anything I enjoy that He's not part of it, it's bitter to the soul who loves Him. And all sufferings with Christ are sweet. The worst things of Christ's suffering for Him are more truly delightful than the best things of the world.

So you could say the worst aspect of being a Christian is I've got to suffer. One, you don't want to say it's the worst aspect. It might be the hardest.

But that's better than anything that the world has to offer to be able to share even in that small detail. Christ's afflictions are sweeter than the world's pleasures. Christ's reproaches are more glorious than the world's honors.

And His riches are better than the world's treasures. Love delights in likeness and communion, not only in things otherwise pleasant, but in the hardest and the harshest things which have not in them anything desirable, but only that likeness of Christ. So the thought is very sweet to a heart possessed with this love.

So the thought of suffering is sweet to the heart that possesses a love to be more like Christ, to know Him more. So Peter, he says don't suffer for sin. Verse 15, let none of you suffer as a murderer.

Did Peter actually think Christians were going to go around killing people? I mean, a murderer? A thief? Or an evildoer? I mean, an evildoer is a very broad term. I think Peter's idea is just don't suffer for any type of sin. Whatever it might be.

But it's interesting how Peter adds on to not suffer as a meddler. You know, here you've got all these trials going on and stuff is happening. And you meddle.

You're a busybody. You're getting involved in something. Kind of like the proverb that talks about two people arguing and you get involved and it's like trying to grab a dog by the ear and it turns and it bites you.

And you might run away and say, well, man, I'm being persecuted for righteousness' sake. Peter says, no, you're being persecuted for being a busybody and that's not for the sake of Christ. I mean, in some way, Peter is saying, Christians, as you're suffering, you're walking here with the Lord, you're not so much worried about what all is going on with all these other people and meddling and being a busybody and getting involved in their matters in such a way... Think of this, some people suffer in their relationships, right? They suffer because of hurt that happened in a relationship and they might feel like, well, I was trying to give the person truth.

Well, they might have been actually meddling in something they shouldn't have been and you're suffering because you were actually being a meddler. So I don't know, I didn't have a whole lot of other thoughts on that, suffering for being a meddler. But take that to heart.

We are in an age where it is very easy to be a busybody and go house to house on the Internet and be absolutely distracted and get involved in things that we've got no business being involved in. And I guess that brings an example up. When my wife was single, there was some argument going on on Facebook and she got involved in it and she kind of got kicked back.

And she was trying to give them some truth. The fact was she was meddling in something and it wasn't really for righteousness' sake, she should have stayed out of it. And she didn't.

Because she didn't have to put a stamp on the envelope and send it for three days. It takes three seconds to type it and hit enter. And my wife doesn't do that anymore.

More than I know of. Say again? Yeah, self-induced suffering. That's not something to glory in.

You can think about on the job. My boss has eight hours for me to work, and if I'm meddling with certain things that I think are honoring to God, but I'm not honoring my boss's eight hours of work, I'm being involved in the business at work in a way that I'm actually meddling with the boss's time that he's paying me for. And if I get fired for that, it's not because I was righteous, it's because I was being a meddler.

I was being a busybody at work not focusing on the task at hand. So, Peter, he's giving all of these things. Don't be surprised.

Don't be depressed. Think of future glory. Think of the Spirit of glory resting upon you as you're suffering and rejoice.

Don't cheat on the test. Don't suffer as a meddler. Yet, if anyone suffers as a Christian, don't be ashamed, but praise God that you bear the name of Christian and that you get to take part in being a Christian.

And then he says in v. 17, he gives the word for. For, do all these things, think this way, for it's time. And some would say he's saying it's time for that fiery trial.

That trial, it's coming. It's time. You need to have your mind prepared for action.

That fiery trial, it is coming. It's time for judgment. And as you saw in Diego's lesson in 1 Corinthians 11, you can have the word judgment, but the word judgment does not just refer to final judgment.

If he's talking about a final judgment here, for one, it doesn't make a lot of sense in the context for it's time for judgment. I mean, right now, judgment was going to happen. And then when he alludes to the proverb, all the proverb says is it quotes Proverbs 11, if the righteous suffers, if the righteous is repaid on earth.

Peter, instead of saying repaid on earth, says scarcely saved. Well, how are we repaid on earth? We suffer on earth. That's what we get.

We take part in suffering. You're not being repaid with money. We're being repaid with suffering for bearing the name of a Christian.

And so Peter, he rewards it when he puts it here. He's kind of alluding to it. And he says scarcely saved.

Scarcely meaning with difficulty. With difficulty, this trial that's going to come upon them, it's going to be a difficult one to get through. That's why I don't want you surprised.

I don't want you depressed. I want you rejoicing. I want you looking to the future glory in the midst of the trial.

I don't want you sinning in how you respond. And don't be ashamed as the world mocks you as you go through this. But praise the Lord that you bear the name of Christian.

For it's time for this fiery trial to begin at the household of God. And it begins with us. Why does he say it begins with us? He's alluding to Ezekiel 9. It talks there about suffering and it says it's going to begin in the sanctuary.

It's going to begin with the elders in the Old Testament sanctuary. I think that's just the idea. It's just alluding to that.

And it's the idea that who suffers mainly in this life? It's the Christians. I mean, there are lost people. They don't really face much suffering.

But the Christian, we've been promised through much tribulation, we're going to enter the heaven. So, our suffering is now. The wicked suffering is in hell for all of eternity.

Will the wicked suffer in this life? Yes. But they've got a day coming where their suffering is going to be nothing like we face in this life. It's going to be absolutely different.

So, this judgment, this trial by fire, it's going to test the genuineness of our faith. It's going to settle the question of where we're at. And it's going to test the value of our profession.

And it's going to be difficult. It's going to be hard. The gate is narrow.

Trials are to prove who's saved. And those who are proven to be saved, trials are to improve. So they prove and they improve.

That's what happens. Luke 13, it says, some in a time of testing, they fall away. There are people who receive the Word with joy, but a fiery trial comes, they fall away.

They no longer obey the Gospel. Now, who's writing this letter here? Peter. A man who in a time of trial was ashamed to bear the name of Christian.

Peter at that point was not saying, if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God that he bears the name of Christian. Peter was kind of saying, I don't know who that man is. I don't bear the name of Christian.

So whatever Peter's talking about here, I don't think Peter's forgot his past experience in his lacking compassion to Christians in the midst of suffering. But what did Peter do? He failed and he went and wept bitterly. And he arose and he strengthened his brothers.

He didn't drop out of the class. He kept on going no matter how hard the course was. And that's what the Christian's got to do.

Those who endure to the end will ultimately be saved. And that's the idea that Peter's talking about. Through trials, you've got to endure.

Judgments are coming upon you and they're testing you and trying you. And it's going to prove the tested genuineness of your faith. And then we get near the end here.

People obviously in all of this would say, what about the lost? What's going to happen to them? And so he says that two times. What will be the outcome of those who do not obey? And then what will become of the ungodly and the sinner? Because he's basically saying the same idea in two verses. He's just saying it and then he alludes to a proverb which states what he's trying to get across.

That proverb, Proverbs 11:31 in the ESV, it says, how much more? It talks about the righteous being repaid on earth and it says for the wicked, how much more? What's going to happen to the lost? Our suffering is so minor compared to how much more their suffering is going to be in eternity in hell. I mean, Jesus, He taught that there's weeping, there's gnashing of teeth, the worm never dies, there's no sleep day or night. Hell is terrifying.

So, believers, you suffer. Don't worry about the wicked. They've got a day coming.

What you want to worry about is trusting the Lord and rejoicing in the midst of your trial because Peter says, rejoice to the extent you share in Christ's sufferings in verse 13, that you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed. You want to be rejoicing now. You want to be one of those who's a rejoicer because that's the true Christian.

And the true Christian has a greater day of joy coming and that's where we're looking to. As Peter says later on, to the day of eternity. The Christian is looking to that day.

So, verse 19, Therefore, let those who suffer according to God's will. Know that we suffer. And we want to thank Him for that.

Let those who suffer according to God's will. And what do you do in the midst of suffering? You entrust your souls to a faithful Creator while doing good. God is faithful.

He's not left you in the midst of the suffering. And God is your Creator. You're His property more than your own.

He can take care of you. Creating you is more difficult than taking care of you, right? I mean, what's more difficult? Taking care of you or creating you? And Peter says He's created you. So He can take care of you.

I mean, He did the harder part. He can take care of you. And He deems to take care of us by actually putting us through refining trials that we shouldn't be surprised at, that are ultimately leading us to the ultimate sharing in His glory in that final day.

And in the midst of our trials, we're to do good. As we trust the Lord, we're to do good to our enemies. We're to do good to those who hate us.

What did those people in Luke 21 do when their family turned them over to the government and had them killed? What did the church do? I don't know. They did good. Somehow they sought to do good to the family members who had their brothers and sisters in Christ killed.

What did that look like? I have no idea. But they did something good. Now, let me close and I want to mention a quick thought.

So our sister Rachel, some of you saw that update she sent. And she mentioned on WhatsApp, she says this, I'm reading 1 Peter. When I got to 4.12-19, this passage, she says this, this is Rachel Saucedo, I can't help thinking I'm not suffering because I'm a Christian.

Meaning, she's got cancer. Her point is, I've got cancer, and it's not like this is persecution for righteousness' sake. And the big thing Peter is focusing on here is persecution for righteousness' sake, persecution for being a Christian.

That's the specific aspect of suffering he's honing in on. It's not that these truths aren't real though in the midst of cancer. But she says this, I'm suffering because I live in a fallen world with cancer, but the Lord, I know You're sovereign, faithful, it says faithful here, help me to keep trusting You no matter what else You bring my way.

And I was thinking, is our sister making a correct... is she drawing the right idea out of here that Peter is focused on suffering that's coming for specifically righteous deeds? And I think overall, she's right about that. But it made me think of this. Let me ask this question.

Is there any righteous person who had physical suffering and it was him being persecuted for his righteous conduct? Say again? Yeah, Job. To Job's eyes, he just had a physical ailment. Boils.

But when you read in the book of Job, why did Job have that? He was specifically suffering at the hands of Satan. God had allowed that. And it says in Job 2, the devil says, stretch out your hand and touch his bone and his flesh.

He'll curse you to your face. The Lord said to Satan, behold, he's in your hand. Only spare his life.

So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and struck Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. So my point to Rachel is what if because you're a righteous woman, Satan has struck you with this specific suffering? Meaning there is a way that you actually have a physical suffering and it is directly connected to the fact of your righteousness, even though there's no person that you see that's involved with you getting that sickness, there might be something going on in the satanic realm that God has allowed. And Job took a piece of broken pottery with which to scrape himself while he sat in the ashes.

Then his wife said to him, do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die. Job said to her, you speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God and shall we not receive evil? In all this, Job did not sin in his lips.

You think about Job. He had a fiery trial. And it was for righteousness' sake.

It's because he was a blameless man. And the devil wanted to show, Lord, look, Job's going to deny you. If you let him suffer, if you let his body be touched, he's going to deny you.

And you know what we find Job doing? He blessed the Lord. And he wasn't surprised. He wasn't shocked.

And he had bam, bam, bam, bam. All these things hit him at once. And Job didn't actually look at it and say this is really strange and unusual.

Why is this happening to me? Job looked at this and he was able to bless the Lord who gives and takes away. So no matter what gets taken away in this life, we've got to remember, there's a day coming where

you know what's going to get taken away? Suffering. There's going to be no more tears.

There's going to be glory. There's going to be rest. We're going to rest from our labors.

Our labors of doing good in the midst of suffering. And so, we don't want to be depressed in trials. We want to rejoice.

We don't want to be surprised in trials. We don't want to look at them as strange and unusual because they're not. And we want to be thankful we can bear the name of Christian in the midst of the trial and honor the Lord Jesus Christ.

We want to be expecting the power of the Spirit of God to be upon us in the midst of the trial and the Lord helping us in supernatural ways that when that season dies down, we'll want to be back in the middle of that season and not in a season where everything is kind of normal. And for those New Testament Christians, whatever trial was coming their way, Peter says it was going to begin. Some type of suffering began.

And if it is indeed alluding and referring to what happened in Luke 21 and in Matthew 24 right before the destruction of Jerusalem, they suffered severely during that time. And that's not anything like what we're facing in our day. It's just not.

And ultimately, the coronavirus is not hitting us. You could more view the coronavirus as judgment upon a wicked world and God's trying to awaken them. But yeah, we shouldn't be surprised if Christians get sick in the midst of all of this because we don't have a promise that we're not going to get sick.

But we should rejoice in the Lord. So whether it's being persecuted for righteousness sake, which dealt with the immediate context, or any trial you're going through, you want to think about these things and these truths. Okay, let's pray.

Father, Lord, thank You that You supernaturally give us joy to rejoice in the midst of suffering and fiery trials. Lord, we thank You that You are in the business of testing the genuineness of our faith. We thank You, Lord, that Lord, not only should we not be surprised at trials, but Lord, we're not surprised that professing Christians often fall away in seasons of trials.

And they go out from us because they were never of us. Lord, I pray in the season we're in right now that You would keep the brethren rejoicing in You. Lord, keep us all looking to that day, awaiting for the revealing, awaiting for the coming of Christ.

Lord, we do want to see You face to face. Lord, we want the veil completely removed. We want direct, intimate communion with You.

And we're thankful for all the communion and what we experience in this life right now. Lord, You're so good to us. So Lord, be with the saints.

Strengthen them. Lord, help them help those who are suffering right now that they would live these things out. Lord, we thank You.

You are such a faithful God. We entrust our souls to You. Help us to do.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/ZcvsNFkEXTo.mp4>

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