

# The Sufferings of the Early Christians

by Willie Mullan

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*The sermon emphasizes that suffering for Christ is not a strange thing and should not be unexpected, but rather something to be expected and rejoiced in.*

**Duration:** 1:14:39

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:11-12, Acts 14:22, Romans 8:18, 2 Corinthians 11:23, James 1:2-4, 1 Peter 4:12-16, 1 Peter 5:10

**Topics:** "Martyrdom"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the sufferings and trials that the apostle Paul endured for the sake of spreading the word of God. He mentions how Paul was beaten, stoned, shipwrecked, and faced various dangers and hardships. The speaker contrasts Paul's experiences with the comfortable lives that many Christians lead today, emphasizing the need to learn from Paul's example and be prepared to face trials and rejoice in them. He also references biblical passages, such as 1 Peter 4:12-13 and John 14, to encourage believers to trust in God and look forward to the glory that awaits them.

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## Transcript

So, 1 Peter chapter 4 this evening. 1 Peter chapter 4, and we're looking at verses 12, 13, 14, 16. Looking at five verses this evening, and in these five verses, Peter is going back to the principal subject of this great first book of his.

Because the principal subject in these five chapters of 1 Peter is the sufferings of these early Jewish believers. These were Jewish believers who were scattered throughout Pontus and Galatia and Cappadocia and so on. And Peter's going back to the sufferings of these early Christians.

Of course, there's an application to us. The true interpretation of the book is the sufferings of the early Christians. Ah, but there's an application for the sufferings of probably the last battalion of the church passing through this wilderness.

And that's why I feel that Peter's first epistle is so applicable, because I think that we're going to have far more sufferings than we have. And I believe we need to read these five chapters very carefully. You know, I've been noting this for you as we are going through, and every conceivable angle of Christian suffering is noted in these chapters.

We have them suffering at the trial of their faith under God, suffering in the will of God. And we have them suffering for righteousness' sake. We have them suffering wrongfully.

We have them suffering for conscience' sake. And Peter takes this great principal subject right through the five chapters. But in these five verses this evening, in chapter four, we have the highlights of Peter's exposition on suffering.

And I don't care where you go to read or what book you pick up, you will find nothing greater than the portions we're looking at this evening. It's one of the greatest portions on Christian sufferings ever written. And we're going to look at it very carefully indeed.

You know, Peter uses this word, beloved, very carefully. That's what the paragraph starts with this evening, the word beloved. It could be rightfully translated, divinely loved, because that's exactly what he means.

I think you know that Peter sat at the feet of Christ and he learned his lessons very well. Because when our Lord Jesus Christ was speaking to his disciples, and he was going to touch on something hard to understand, or something that was going to bring a burden to the soul, I notice, and Peter must have learned, that the Lord always used a very tender word just at the beginning of the exposition. Now let me say to the deacons away down at the back, there's a man standing outside.

I can see him through the window. Don't let him stand there in the cold all night. He's been confused with the pub business and he shut up.

My dear brother through the window, come away down to the front door and we'll let you in. Can't do it at that time all night. All right.

Yes, I notice that when our Lord Jesus is just going to say something, and it's going to be hard to understand, and it's going to be difficult to take in, he touches it every time with a tender word. And this is what Peter's doing here. Have a look at the example in 1 John's Gospel, chapter 13.

John's Gospel, chapter 13. Now notice this, our Lord Jesus is in the upper room, and his disciples are seated around him. And he's going to say something to them, and it's going to be very hard for them to take it in.

And Peter, how he does it, with a John 13, verse 33. He says, little children, see the tender preface that's there, actually in the Greek it means, my little children. And this is what he's saying to them, verse 33, Little children, yet a little while I am with you.

Ye shall seek me. And as I said unto the Jews, whither I go ye cannot come. So now I say to you.

You know, the Lord Jesus is breaking the news to them for the very first time here, that he's going to leave them. What a shock that must have been. How hard to take in.

He had called Peter and Andrew from the fishing. He had called James and John and Matthew, the tax-gather, from the receipt of customs. And they had been with them for three and a half years, and they'd learned many things, and now he's saying, As I said unto the Jews, so now I say to you, whither I go ye cannot come, I'm leaving.

Walking out on them, and he had prefaced that by that lovely little phrase, my little children. For sorrow filled their hearts immediately. And then he begins the great discourse in John 14, saying, Let not your heart be troubled.

You believe in God, and what he's actually saying is this. I'm leaving you. And sorrow is filling your hearts.

Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God when you can't see him, as believe in me when you can't see me. But Peter had learned this great thing, that when he had something that was hard to say and difficult to understand, he could preface it with a tender word.

And so you can see him using this word back in chapter 4, 1 Peter 4. He's using this word beloved, and it means divinely loved. You know, what he's trying to say to them, in this great passage that we're after this evening, is this, that the most loved saint may have to suffer. And he's not only saying the most loved saint may have to suffer, but he's saying the most lovely saint will have to suffer.

This is the great thing that he's getting over to. And there was nobody better qualified to put the message across than Peter. And so we're looking at the sufferings of these early Christians, and the first thing we notice is this.

Peter says, beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you. And I've taken a heading for you here, suffering for Christ should not be unthinkable. You know, I think that the believers need to be taught this over and over again, think it not strange concerning the fiery trials.

I believe that a great many of God's people have got this idea, that if you love the Lord with all your heart, and if your trust is steadfastly and continually in Him, and that you obey promptly His commands, you will never be in trouble. And I think that nobody should ever think like that. These people have got a wrong idea.

If you think that being holy and following closely will keep you out of suffering and persecution and trouble, you have been deceived somewhere. You know, somebody said to me the other day, God can never make the church an obstacle to pass through suffering. That's the greatest nonsense I ever heard.

You know, sometimes we get so confused, you know, between the state and the church. And we confuse ourselves thinking about Protestants and Catholics and gunmen and believers. And we don't want anyone to say that God will not make the church to suffer an obstacle, it's complete nonsense.

All right, take the church out of the state for a moment. And the church is the body of Christ. But it is not only an obstacle there, don't let Protestants, this church of Jesus Christ is all over the world.

I'll tell you this. India has crossed the borders into Pakistan, you see, and they're driving both states. And they've got great trenches and big guns and an air force that will swallow up Pakistan.

And I can tell you that there are fugitives flying across the land of Pakistan, you see, and in the midst of them are believers. Yes, there are. The church is in Pakistan too, you know.

And she's on the run tonight. Yes. You know, I led a lady to the Lord in the little room there one day, and she's in Pakistan as a missionary tonight, and probably she's running at this moment.

I think we forget about what the church is. The church is not us, and it is not just Protestants, and it is not just this or that. The church is the believers in Christ worldwide.

And I can tell you that just a couple of years back, the church in the Congo was almost battered and blasted out of existence altogether. Oh, don't you get it into your mind that it would be a strange thing, suffering happen to you. Don't think like that.

Jesus, trying to get this across to them, by the traction of Jesus Christ down through the ages, has suffered in almost every part of the world. For years the believers suffered in Spain, and in Colombia, and in South America, and even in the forest of Africa she has suffered year after year. And tonight, even beyond the Iron Curtain, there are men in prison halls in the ground, and they've been there for years, and they're still believers.

I wonder why we get the notion that we are forced to laugh. Well, get it out of your head just now. Because suffering for Christ should not be unthinkable.

It can come to us, and it may come to us. Now, watch very carefully what he did say. He said, Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you.

Now, he was one of the prophets in the early church, not only a preacher and an evangelist and an apostle, he was one of the prophets. And I think he's telling the church here, under inspiration of course, that there are fiery trials ahead. Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you.

I know that as we read the chapters here, these believers in Cappadocia and Asia and Galatia and Pontus, they were going through trials, and they had many sufferings. The whole book is about the sufferings of the believers. Ah, but there were still more to come.

And he's trying to get it over to them. Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you. And then he puts this bit to it, as though some strange thing happened unto you.

And I think in the second heading there, suffering for Christ should not be unexpected. We should never think that we are so select that suffering couldn't come to the church in Ulster. I hope we will never think like that.

And I think that we could get this quite straight this evening, that sufferings of the church shouldn't be counted a strange thing. Suffering should not be unexpected. We should expect to suffer.

For Christ. You know, when you begin to think very carefully, you think about the apostles, these great men of God, filled with the Holy Ghost and doing wonders for Christ. When you know Stephen was probably the greatest guest in the early church, you know he was able to answer all the questions.

And when he was brought in before the Sanhedrin, that great and venerable court of the Jews, while he stood there without a Bible, without a note, and he quoted the whole Old Testament history of Israel to this great court. And you know, his soul starved the truth unto them, that they couldn't stand it any longer. And the book says, they gnashed on him with their teeth, they went mad.

And you remember how they torn him to death. Let's remember the martyrs of the church for the moment or so. Not only Stephen.

You remember James. For I heard, killed James, the brother of John the Thorn, took his head off. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he arrested Peter.

And on that occasion, the man that's writing this letter was gazing at God through the bars for Herod's determined, when the morning light would come he would kill Peter. The Lord delivered Peter at that time. And you'll find that Paul, this great servant of God's, Austria had covered almost the whole known world in those days.

Starting from Antioch in Styria, going to Cyprus, then going all through the mountainous country of Asia Minor, right over to Troas on the Aegean Sea, then crossing the Aegean Sea and coming into Macedonia to Philippi, down to Goliath, down to Bethlehem, down to Athens, down to Corinth. And he's covered almost the whole known world with the gospel. And yet this man was beheaded.

Why, you would think if anybody was guilty of Satan would be these men. Oh no, they didn't. And every one of the eleven apostles died of martyrdom.

Except John. John was left to die on the Isle of Pius. Why should we think that we are so select that it couldn't come to us? These men expected to die for Christ, we'll find in a moment or two.

That's the thought of Christianity it was. Men who put their shoulders back and smiled at death and went on with the job. Why we're so timid, we're almost afraid to get out at night.

Yes, I want you to get the hold of this, that Stephen and James and Peter and Paul, and if you go into the Old Testament, said Job, by God, give this testimony of Job. He said to the devil, Hast thou considered my cousin Job? There is none like him in all the earth. A perfect and an upright man.

One that fears God and keeps away from evil. Oh, what a testimony for God be given of a fellow. Ah, well, this fellow went through the mill.

Jeremiah went through the mill. Daniel was in the lion's den. There were three Hebrew children who would neither budge nor bend, and when they tried them a bit further would neither burn either.

These men had to take their stand for God. You know, we may have to take our stand, James. I think this is very applicable to us in this day and generation in which we're living.

My dear friends, don't let the thought get into your mind that you're so select that it cannot come to you. And don't get this thought into your mind that it's a strange thing when it comes. The church of Christ should take its stand and expect to suffer.

That's the way through for us. My, we're not going to go through this wilderness thing, standing up for Christ and being righteous and holy without a coming. It will come.

But people went further than that. They said, yes. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery fire which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.

But rejoice. Isn't that a rather queer way to get about it? You know what Peter is saying here is just this. Suffering for Christ should not be unthinkable.

And suffering for Christ should not be unexpected. And suffering for Christ should not be unwelcome. My, we should rejoice.

You know that takes some getting down to, doesn't it? Now, let me show you how some of the old saints got about this problem of suffering. Let's go back for a moment to the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 5. And

you do know that at Acts, chapter 5, the church is not very old. The church came into being in Acts, chapter 2. And we're looking at Acts, chapter 5. And just to get the proper connection, verse 25.

Then came one untold them. And the then refers to this great venerable court of the Jews called the Sanhedrin. Then came one untold them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people.

God had opened the prison doors for them. Then went the captain with the philosophers and brought them without violence. For they feared the people lapsed, they should have been stoned.

And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, saying, Did not we strictly command you that ye should not teach in this name? And behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. Then he to them, the other apostles, answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom he slew and hanged on a tree. Him has God exalted with his right hand to be a prince and a saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God has given to them that obey him.

Now when the council heard that, they were cut to the heart. And took council to try them. Now let's get the socks of the court before us.

You know, they're questioning these men, and you can hear them speaking boldly, We ought to obey God rather than men. And then the whole council gets their heads together, and they're determined to block them off. You know, these fellows are on the verge of being dropped at us one by one.

Wonder how we would stand now. Wonder how many of us would sit at the knees. I wonder how many of us would keep our heads up.

I wonder how many of us would shout back, We ought to obey God rather than men. I have a feeling that the church of Jesus Christ dodges the issue now. We know how to get around it, you know, shut up and go away and don't say anything, in case somebody hooks you.

We've got a bunch of cows in the boat now. Yes, we don't welcome it at all. We dodge it.

Watch this, just exactly what happened then, verse 34. Then there stood up one in the council, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, hard in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space. Putting them outside now till he talks to the council.

He said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do with touching these men. For before these days rose up Judas, boasting himself to be somebody, to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves, who was slain, and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered and brought to Moscow. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him, he also perished, and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.

And now I say unto you, refrain from these men, and let them alone. For if this council or this work be of men, it will come to naught. But if it be of God, ye can it overthrow, lest happily ye be found even to fight against God.

And to him they agreed. And when they had called the apostles, brought them into the room again, and beaten them. Let's get this bit in now.

You know what it meant, don't you? It meant that they brought these men in. They're not going to kill them now, but they're going to give them a beating. It means that they took their robes off from their back inside, their handles as it stood before, and with their bare back they left it into red flesh puddles with the lash.

They were beaten with the lash. I wonder how you would feel after that. Your back in red flesh, and blood is running down your back, and you're getting let off with it.

Now, what I want you to see is this. And to him they agreed. And when they had called the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus and let them go.

Now watch it carefully. And they departed from the presence of the council rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. I wonder how we would get on with it now.

You know, I can see these fellows, backs bleeding and they're coming out of the council, some of them stronger than others, but there's a joy in every heart. Their eyes are towards the heavens, and they're rejoicing as they look up, rejoicing that they're counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And it's what was in the martyrs.

Nobody scared the martyrs. There was a spirit in the martyrs that we've almost lost. We don't rejoice anymore.

We should rejoice. My, we should never make this suffering unwelcome. You know, there's another way of doing this.

Have a look at 2 Corinthians, chapter 4, please. 2 Corinthians, and we're at chapter 4. Now, this is Paul writing. And Paul is saying in verse 15, For all things are for your sake, that the abundant grace might prove the thanksgiving of many redounds of the glory of God.

For which cause we thank not. But though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our life's affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal wish of glory.

You know, he's looking a way forward, isn't he? These other believers were looking up and praising the Lord that they were worthy. He's looking a way forward and he's looking to the glory. And he's trying to balance the affliction of this moment that we live in with the eternal wish of glory.

You know, the word light there, or light affliction, is being contrasted with wish of glory. And the word affliction is being contrasted with glory. And the word moment is being contrasted with eternal.

You know, our light affliction, which is but for a moment, you know, it's working for us far more exceeding and eternal wish of glory. You know, if you settle for it down here, then bless God you're in, you came out younger, and He'll reward everything. And no matter what the sufferings might be, it's only light affliction.

You know, when you take that phrase on your tongue, our light affliction, you should always remember the man who paid the price for it all. You see, I'll do you some of the afflictions with it, 2 Corinthians chapter 11. 2 Corinthians 11, and he's talking here about those who have belittled him.

Verse 23, he says, Are they ministers of Christ? I speak as a fool. I am more. In liberals, more abundant.

In stripes, above measure. In prisons, more frequent. In death, oft.

Of the Jews, five times received I forty stripes, said one. When they bent your back over the scourging pool, the sentence was forty stripes. They only give you thirty-nine, in case they missed the count.

And five times, he said, I received thirty-nine stripes. Twice was I beaten with rods. Once was I stoned.

Twice I suffered shipwreck. A night and a day I have been in the deep. In canyons often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting often, in cold and nakedness.

We know nothing about us. We're far too well off. And we wouldn't welcome it at all.

This man sums this whole calendar of suffering up like this. Oh, light affection! Now we've had a cushy pilgrimage. Oh, yes.

If the rain rains too hard, we grumble. Yes, we need to get back to this, don't we? We need to get back to looking onward to the glory. What a day when I step out of this robe of flesh and see Him face to face.

When I've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun, I'll have no less days to sing God's praise than when I first begun. Oh, if we could only look up and see the Savior and say it's for you. Or if we could only look forward and see the glory, the eternal weight of glory.

Oh, we'd stop the morning. But do you know this? Peter does another thing, doesn't he? Let's go back to 1 Peter 4. You know, he's not so much looking up and counting himself worthy, or he's not so much looking forward and seeing the eternal weight of glory. He's looking back, you know.

See how our chapter started. You remember this. I don't need to go into it again.

For as much then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, he looks back to see his suffering. You know, friends, if we could only see this. I remember the day when I stood in Pilate's judgment hall for the very first time.

And there was a little lady with me. She was a nun. And she was the mother superior down there.

And it was very early in the morning, and she was an old lady. And I walked around this room and sort of came to the conclusion this is the very place where Christ stood. And I said, Madam, you know, when I think of the Lord of Glory, God's eternal Son standing here, with somebody's spot on his head.

And a big man just smacked him on the jaw. And another one pulled the hair from his cheeks. And he found deadly creatures in the corner with the crown of thorns and then came home and rammed it on his head.

And you can see him being bent over the scratching pole and lashed. And we grumble at times. Oh, we grumble.

The least little thing upsets us. We know nothing about it. That's the trouble.

What do we know about slavery? My dear friends, it's time we learned this lesson. It's time we began to see things from this angle. It can come to us, and we're ready for it.

Could we welcome it if it comes? Could we rejoice? You see how he put it, don't you? We're back at 1 Peter 4. He says, Beloved, think it not strange concerning if I retire witness to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you, but rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings. Oh, I wonder, could I look back and see him and kick my stun and let the devil do whatever he likes? And then he went a little bit further with that. He says, that when his glory shall be revealed.

You know, he's looking backwards and forwards at the same time. He's got it correctly, of course. You know, I think that Peter learns his lessons coming down through his pilgrimage.

There was a time when he was afraid of suffering. The little man said, Are you one of them? He said, I'm not one of them. And then he denied the Lord was always afraid of getting mixed up in the trouble.

Then, you know, there was once upon a time when he was afraid of men, of what men would think. Oh, yes, he was down with the Gentiles and having a jolly good time, and then some Jews came, and then Peter backed out. Fearing the Jews.

Oh, you know, we're so cowardly at times. I'll tell you this, this man got onto his feet somewhere. And you remember in the prison, there was no sign of fear.

And I'll tell you this, Peter died on the cross, upside down. The Lord told him about this. The Lord said, You'll glorify me like this.

They'll take you, they'll bind your hands. And it is reported in history that he was crucified upside down, not of fear in his body. He says, Rejoice! You're partaker of Christ's suffering, that when his glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy.

Oh, what a lesson is here! Suffering for Christ should not be unthinkable. You're not so select, your Lord can't come to you. Suffering for Christ should not be unexpected.

Suffering for Christ should not be unwelcomed. You know, we used to have a laugh attending this class. Three girls who watched us, Queen's Storm Week, I suppose.

Godly woman who loved this book. And she took cancer. And I went to see her one day.

And before I went, I got down on my knees and said, Lord, what will I say to this big girl? Tell me what I'll say. And I got a little portion from the upper room story there. What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know it after.

And I got down on my knees and held her hand and I said, Ethel, I want to tell you what the Lord told me before I told you. What I do, he said. What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know it after.

And I'm going to take the phrase one by one and expound on what I do. And she said to me when I expounded the first one, if he's doing it, I want to hear the rest. And I don't care whether he tells me or not.

She got it all right. She got it all right. Yes, Peter goes a bit further with this, though.

He says that if ye be repulsed for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you. You know, I put the heading here, suffering for Christ should not be unbearable. You know, if we're going to be selected for suffering, if it's going to come and we must rejoice within it, ah, there's the Spirit of glory that can come upon us, you know.

Why did the martyrs see Paul and Silas in the innermost prison, feet outstretched, tossed in the trough since the dark night, hands against the wall in the inner prison, Paul and Silas, ah! Silent praises is the word. Silas and the colors singing. We don't bother raising the chorus.

What a better morning would go on. I wonder can we get this bit out properly. You know, the Spirit of glory there, it should have a capital S, the Spirit, because it's the Holy Spirit and the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of glory and of God, it's the Spirit of God.

It should have a capital S. I think it's very wonderfully put, you know. You know, when God called Abraham, let me do that for you properly, that's the Acts of the Apostles, what is it, chapter 7 it is, I think, chapter 7 it is, not the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 7, and this is what I was telling you a moment or two ago about Stephen standing before this Sanhedrin, this Jewish council, and the high priest was putting a question to him, then said, the high priest, are these things so? And he, Stephen, answered, men, brethren and fathers, how come? You can see he was very respectful of the council and though they were going to take his life, I think we should shine in all the corners we're placed in. Men, brethren and fathers, how come? The God of glory, I want you to watch the phrase, the God of glory, because we're going to think about the Spirit of glory in a moment, but the God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia.

You know, this is very wonderful because Abraham was the way over at Ur of the Chaldees. He was in the land of Mesopotamia. He was in Babylon, if you want to get it properly, because that is the land of Babylon.

And I can tell you that he was surrounded there with the idolatry of Nimrod. Do you remember Nimrod? He found a new religion in the land of Shinar. And at the time that God came, the God of glory came to Abraham, he was in the midst of great darkness and idolatry and abominations.

It was the beginning of the Babylonian religion and it has not ended yet. It was the God of glory that came. You know, when you see Christ on the cross and the sun hides its face and the darkness deepens, what a dark day it is in this world.

The darkest this world has ever seen. Oh well, on the cross is the Lord of glory. For if the princes of this world had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

And you know, it is always in the darkness when things seem to be at their deepest and worst, that the God of glory and the Lord of glory and in these last days of suffering must come, the Spirit of glory. All we need to have the Spirit of glory resting upon us, you can't do it in your own strength. To be filled with the Holy Ghost, to suffer for Christ, can only be done by the power of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of glory and of God resting upon you.

You see, reproach is a terrible thing. Men reproach you, you know. And it's very hard to take.

When men say things and they blaspheme Christ's name. Let's go back to, you see, exactly what's happening here in 1 Peter 4. Peter is saying, If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye for

the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part he is evil-spoken of.

That is, these people who are reproaching you, he is evil-spoken of. But you know, if you know how to take it and how to shine for God in the dark, you know, through your not reviling again and when you suffer you let them not. You know, you're drooling by the Lord.

You know, this counteracts the whole evil that's going on. You know, the Russians have an invention and they have it aimed at every city in the United States just at this moment. And the United States have something that watches it all day and all night long and would give the United States about three minutes of warning.

But the States have gone one better now. If the Russians should fire off this invention to destroy the great cities of the States, the States can fire off something that will meet it in mid-air and blast it before it comes. It's counteraction.

And when they reproach us, all that we could stand and shine until the grace and the love of Christ, I'll tell you we could blast their evil speeches and we ought to be doing it. It took me a long time to learn that. I'm not hardly capable of learning that.

You know, when I went to work at Dixon's Nursery, Lord's Gardens, I became the foreman there. That was about the worst day in my life when I became the foreman. Christian foreman.

I had about 70 men under me there and you would get some of the toughest nuts of the day. And I thought it was a big ex-Irish God's man, Ian McCulloch, and he just thought he would fool around in there. But every time I walked past, they all had a whack to do and I got to examine it if it was done right.

And when I walked past, he would say, Hallelujah. Amen. Hallelujah.

Glory to God. Kept you some for a day or two, you know. And an old fella at the end of the line said to me, I don't let him annoy you.

I said, you know, he's nearly at his perilous length. So, walking past once, he said, Hallelujah. I turned around slowly and said, is there anything wrong with you? He said, would you like to correct it? And like a slouch, he said, I threw the coat down.

Get out of here. Big man, you know, thought I was a slouch too. Well, he wasn't very good, so I wet him and put him on his back and lifted him up and wet him again.

And I nearly met with him in three seconds. And I said, you know, I'm very sorry I had to do that. And I'm packing it up and you can do whatever you like.

And that's the most awful bit of my whole life as a Christian. It would have been far more effective if I could have suffered. But not.

It wasn't like Christ at all. It was the old man again. I could have beaten any day of it.

And I went out to do it. Don't do it. Don't do it.

It doesn't glorify Christ doing that. That is all wrong. Ah, you need to suffer, you know.

Can't say I couldn't suffer somebody saying Hallelujah. Took me a long time to learn. To learn that I'm not exempt.

Took me a long time to welcome it. Took me a long time to know how to deal with it. Oh, thank God that Jesus, when he was reviled, reviled not again.

And when he suffered, he fled not. What an example he has left us. And Peter goes on with this, you know.

Peter goes on with this. He comes to this bit. He says, let none of you suffer as a murderer.

Somebody said to me, did he need to write that to Christians? Yes, he needed to write that to Christians. Is it possible for a Christian to murder? Yes. God only has to teach you.

You know, when you come to think about murder, it's a big subject. Of course, I could live and lose my senses one day and kill somebody. Yes, I know the verdict would be that it would be murder.

But with an unsound mind. Don't you remember that Moses killed a man and buried him in the sand? You know, the Egyptians were beating and bringing great persecutions upon Israel. The taskmasters were giving them nothing to work with and expecting great results.

And then when the results were not there, they beat them with lashes. And one day, Moses was provoked. There is a thing called provocation, you know.

And he killed the man and buried him in the sand. And when you go into murder, you know it's a dreadful thing. Because it's the carnal thing that gets into believers.

And they hate the devil. And that's murder. So it is.

Please have a look at 1 John, in case you're getting it wrong. 1 John, 1 John chapter 3, please. We know that we at 1 John 3 verse 14, we know that we have passed from death unto life.

Because we love the brethren. And it doesn't mean the people who shut themselves into halls, you know. It means all the believers.

And we ought to love all the believers. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.

You know, there's an old carnal thing that gets into some of the believers. And if you don't do what they want you to do, they hate you. Friends, thank God that I can look God full in the face tonight.

Well, I've had many differences with my brethren, and I've never hated one. I pray for them. Hospital, see the light, and all the rest of it.

Here's a thing that torments some believers. This thing is, whoever hateth his brother is a murderer. And ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

You see, the word abiding is the opposite of words. Because I'll tell you that if eternal life is really abiding, dwelling in you ritually, you'll never do it. But if you're a backslidden carnal creature, you can do it.

Yes, you can. You're to suffer everything and not murder. Look at this catalogue of things that Peter says.

Verse 15, chapter 4, we're back again. Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief. You say, surely Christians don't steal.

Yes, they do. What do you think he'd write it for? For a man in a spinning mill that I knew well told me this. She was with one girl in among the daughters.

And he said, she lived for God. She was a great relapse. She was always singing about the Lord, and talking about the Lord, and her work proved that she belonged to the Lord.

And this relapse told him this. One night, you know, she needed colored thread for something she was doing. And she couldn't find the color anywhere.

So she lifted two or three spools of this color, put it down her breast. And went home with it. But she couldn't use it.

She brought it back the next morning and said to the foreman, look, I was tempted yesterday. I took that. I couldn't use it.

I had to bring it back, and she was crying. He says, you know, I'm glad you brought that back, because I see you taking it. And I was so sorry that you were destroying the Testament.

He said, so went home and wept all night about it. Oh, Wittgenstein, you're not to suffer like that, you know. You're not to suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer.

Don't be running about evil speaking about everybody. Speak your time about things. He's a great one.

Or as a busybody in other men's muscles. Do you know what a busybody is? Nosey Parker, that's who that is. You know, we have an old saint here, and he'll eat me about this, but then I don't mind, you know.

There used to be a busybody up in the little place where he lived. He lived out against the hills. Busybody running about.

There's an old fella who used to run around the houses. Get all the news and put the best tourists and talk in every house. You know that creature that goes around.

But he wasn't only a busybody, you know. This dear old saint through the secret light told me, he said he would come in and sit down at your house, and if there were bananas on the table, well, he'd just peel one or two or three and he'd eat the bananas off you. He said if there were apples on the centre of the table, just for show, he'd eat the apples.

He said he was a character. So he said, I thought, well, we'll put an end to him. And this day the centre bowl on the table is plumbed, lovely plumbed, victorious plumbed.

And then your boy came, sat down, sat and licked from the plumb. And lastly, the old fella just goes, you're not eating those plumbs are you? He says I am. He says I'm those injectors with sick men for the worms.

He says he's taking the plumbs with the sickness. But there's no use running for doctor, because by the time you get the doctor you'll be dead, and the old fella was nearly dead. Down it went.

Yes, you can see this, can't you? He got the head rings. Suffering for Christ should not be unthinkable, and suffering for Christ should not be unexpected, and suffering for Christ should not be unwelcome.

Suffering for Christ should not be unbearable when the spirit of glory and of God is upon you.

Suffering in this sense as the murderer, or as the thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody, is most unbecoming. Suffering in this sense is most uncompromising. See what he says here, verse 16.

Yet, if any man suffer as a Christian, it's a great word that, you know. Oh, I know it's been muddled up by Christian countries, and Christian that, and Christian this. The word simply means Christ's one.

Friend, if you're to suffer in the factory tomorrow because you're Christ's one, don't you be ashamed. Don't you be ashamed. Or if your mother and father put you out because you're Christ's one, don't you be ashamed.

Or if you lose your job because you cannot do a second thing for the firm, because you're Christ's one, then don't be ashamed. Isn't it a great paragraph on Christian suffering? Next week we've just two or three verses to end that chapter, and there's a beautiful phrase at the end, a faithful creator, and I want to tell you about the faithful creator next week. Five hundred and thirty-seven, please.

Five hundred and thirty-seven, Saviour, lead me, lest I stray. Gently lead me all the way. I am safe when by Thy side.

I would in Thy love abide. Five hundred and thirty-seven, please. Lord, part us in Thy fear.

Take us to our home safely. Let Thy blessing be upon us. For Christ's sake.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

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