

1 Peter 4:12-19

- I. 12 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering,**
- A. as though something strange were happening to you.
 - B. **13 But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.**
- II. 14 If you are insulted because of the name of Christ,**
- A. you are blessed,
 - B. **for the Spirit**
 - 1. of glory
 - 2. and of God rests on you.
- III. 15 If you suffer,**
- A. it should not be as
 - 1. a murderer
 - 2. or thief
 - 3. or any other kind of criminal,
 - 4. or even as a meddler.
 - B. **16 However, if you suffer as a Christian,**
 - 1. do not be ashamed,
 - 2. but praise God that you bear that name.
- IV. 17 For**
- A. it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God;
 - 1. and
 - a) *if it begins with us,*
 - b) *what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?*
 - 2. **18 And,**
 - a) *“If it is hard for the righteous to be saved,*
 - b) *what will become of*
 - (1) the ungodly
 - (2) and the sinner?”
 - B. **19 So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should**
 - 1. commit themselves to their faithful Creator
 - 2. and continue to do good.

Conceptual Outline

- I. Do not be negatively affected by the reality of painful trials**
 - A. It's nothing strange & to be expected
 - B. Choose to rejoice that you can participate in Christ's suffering

- II. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ**
 - A. you are blessed
 - B. because of an unseen reality - the Spirit rests on you.

- III. Two kinds of suffering**
 - A. suffering for wrong
 - B. suffering for identity in Christ

- IV. Two kinds of judgment**
 - A. **Timing**
 - 1. begins with God's family
 - 2. those disobey will not escape
 - B. **Severity**
 - 1. difficult for those who are saved
 - 2. devastations for ungodly & sinners

- V. Behaviors in the suffering**
 - A. commit to our faithful Creator
 - B. continue to do good

Study Questions:

1. Have you ever been insulted for your identity (ethnic, sexual, religious, etc.)? What was your reaction at the time? Have you been punished for doing a good thing? What was your reaction then? Did these events have any long term effect on you or your relationship with this person & other people?

2. Peter continues his encouragement to the suffering believers in his days. Previously, he spoke of the following:

- Purpose of Suffering - proof & refining of our faith (1:6-7)
- Enduring suffering for doing good (2:18-20)
- Christ's example (2:21-25; 3:18-20)
- Christian reaction to their persecutors (3:9-16)
- Suffering helps believers to be "done with sin" (4:1-3)

In this passage, he addresses Christian suffering because of our identity. First, he invites us to consider two opposing realities about suffering. To identify the 1st reality, let's find some of the words, especially adjectives, he uses to describe suffering. From these words, what reality is he saying about suffering?

- painful trial, surprised, strange, insulted, suffer, ashamed, hard
- Suffering is painful, not desirable, undeserved, unjust

3. Despite his recognition of this reality, Peter asks us to not to be surprised or feel strange? How is suffering surprising or strange?

- Doing good should bring good responses; following the Messiah should bring glory. Suffering as a Christian and for doing good is illogical. It does not follow our normal cause & effect formula.

Instead, being surprised, what does he ask us to do? Why? How is that possible? What is the unseen reality that he points us to?

- rejoice (12) & praise God (16).
- We rejoice because we're participating in Christ's suffering, the suffering is Christ's, He is suffering with us.
- there's a future blessing when He returns (Lk 9:25, Rom 8:16-18)
- current blessing - the Spirit of glory and of God rests on us (He's pleased with us, His strength, protection, & grace is with us, He's going through it with us.) The unseen reality is the blessing of His Presence now and His promised blessings in the future.

4. In verses 15-16, Peter points out 2 types of suffering. What are they? How are they different in terms of their effects in the spiritual realm? What is that significant of the "name"? Is there other kinds of suffering? Can the blessings apply?

- suffering for wrong doing & for Christian identify. A list of our new identifies is in I Peter 2:9

- If we suffer for wrong doing, it is justifiable punishment. We bring shame to Christ's name, not glorifying to God, Spirit will be "unrest"
- Jesus' Name - glorious, precious, powerful, good, righteous, holy
- Christian identity - (2:5, 9, 10), wrong doing is not fitting for our identity
- Natural suffering that's common to man (I Cor 10:13) can be brought on by the Enemy as in the case with Job. Peter also described it as "painful trial" in v. 12. Blessings can probably still be applied because of our identity in Christ.

5. After talking about 2 kinds of suffering, Peter talks about 2 kinds of judgment? What are they? How are they different?

- Judgment of the saints & judgment of the ungodly
- Timing - begins with the saints, even now; unavoidable for the ungodly
- Severity - hard for the saints; devastating for the ungodly

If the saints' judgment are current and has begun with suffering, then what is the wrong that they're being judged?

- The sin nature which we're still a part of. Suffering is the refining process so that we can be presented holy & blameless, the sanctification process.

6. With the 2 realities, 2 types of suffering and judgments in mind, how should believers respond to suffering? Why is each of these responses important? Why does Peter emphasize on faithful "Creator" not "Savior" who can rescue them?

- Rejoice (choosing a different emotional response), praise (aware of God & His power, seeing the unseen reality), commit (trust & rest in Him knowing both unseen reality and future blessings, faith in action), cont. doing good (witness to the world & process of being made perfect.)
- Creator - controls life & death in face of threats to their lives, powerful & sovereign, purposeful, faithful from the beginning, suffering is His willful, purposeful plan for us, the emphasis would not be to rescue or spare us of pain.

Take a moment to consider the attitudes you have in your current suffering. Which of the four attitudes need more work? Design a tool to remind yourself of these 4 attitudes (magnet on the refrigerator, note card, software messages, screen saver?)