

Suffering Well

1 Peter 4:12-19

Introduction

How to suffer well...

Read 1 Peter 4:12-19

Exposition

I. Don't Be Surprised by Suffering (Vs. 12)

You should expect to suffer if you follow Jesus! Yet, you need to realize that suffering is proving the genuineness of your faith (1 Peter 1:6-9), which is a great thing!

II. Rejoice as you Share in the Sufferings of Christ! (Vs. 13)

Just as Jesus temporarily suffered for obeying the will of the Father, so Christians will temporarily suffer for obeying the will of the Father. Though there will be great suffering for Christians before Christ returns, there will be joy inexpressible when He does return! The result of this suffering will be great joy at the return of Christ.

III. Recognize the Blessing of Sharing in the Suffering of Christ (Vss. 14-16)

As a follower of Christ who shares in His suffering, the Spirit of Glory and God rest upon you! When we suffer for the sake of Jesus, He would have us to know that we are in good company. In other words, it is a privilege to suffer for Jesus. We are blessed, if we suffer for Christ.

IV. Entrust Yourself to the Faithful and Just Creator. (Vss. 17-19)

In these concluding verses, Peter says that judgment begins at "God's household." This refers to those who identify themselves as Christians, as members of Christ's body, the church. At first, the concept of judgment may not set well with us since we know that scripture also teaches that Christians have been forgiven and declared not guilty.

So, what kind of judgment is this if Christians are no longer the wrath of God? Well, it is a judgment of discernment and sifting. While Christians have been forgiven and justified by God, they have not been exempted from suffering. The apostle Paul said that all who desire "to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." (2 Tim. 3:12) So the judgment that begins with the house of God is a judgment in which God uses suffering associated with Jesus to "sift through" those who are true believers and those who are false professors. Jesus clearly speaks of this in **Matt. 24:9-13**...

So, there is a sifting, a judgment that is coming in the form of suffering for Jesus' name that will separate the true believers from the false professors. And according to Peter, the only way to make it to the end is to entrust yourself to God, just as Christ did in His sufferings.

Conclusion

So, how will you endure when the suffering comes? My prayer is that, by the grace of Christ, you and I will resolve to entrust ourselves to Christ, who suffered for us, not only to bring us to God, but to break the power of suffering in this life!