

Our Stewardship of Suffering

1 Peter 4:12-19

PART FOUR

Introduction

Psalm 139:5, You hem me in behind and before, and lay your hand on me.”

God has entrusted Christians with a stewardship of His Providence: *provision, parameters, and persecution*, by His divine appointment.

Four Instructions on how to exercise responsible stewardship of trials and suffering:

1. *Expectation of Suffering* (v12)
2. *Exultation in Suffering* (vv13-14)
3. *Examination & Exoneration in Suffering* (vv15-18)
4. *Exemplification in Suffering* (v19)

We are to prepare for persecution when it comes – not *if*, but when.

‘Third-Rail’ Christians

IV. Exemplification in Suffering (v19)

“Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good” (v19).

This verse is the conclusion of the passage and key to the message of the epistle.

Be a living example of Him who lived and died as our Example.

“For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps” (1 Peter 2:21).

Jesus is our supreme example of how to suffer responsibly. We are to learn how to live by His example.

“when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly” (2:23).

“entrust” Gk *paratithemi*; ‘to put or place near someone.’

Intense suffering should compel the child of God to draw close to the Father in heaven.

“Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, ‘Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!’ And having said this he breathed his last” (Luke 23:46).

“Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking” (1 Peter 4:1).

We need to have “the same way of thinking” about suffering that Jesus had when He suffered.

“let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross” (Hebrews 12:1-2).

We discover Jesus *in* the fiery ordeal. We survive by following Him *through* it, not by avoiding it.

“Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:27).

1 Peter 3:13-17

The apostle Paul continued “strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22).

Endurance in suffering was a running theme and repeated exhortation in the apostle Paul’s final letter:

“Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God” (2 Timothy 1:8).

“Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 2:3).

“Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Timothy 2:10).

“my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived” (2 Timothy 3:11-13).

“As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (2 Timothy 4:5).

3 Ways to Honor God, Survive Suffering, and be *Blessed* by Him:

1. Exemplify Christ
2. Entrust your soul to God
3. Endure suffering

Entrust your soul to a faithful Creator.

Often, a significant part of God’s *purpose* in our suffering includes, not only the pain inflicted, but the struggle of *not knowing why*.

Trust goes beyond answers or it wouldn’t be trust.

Relentless questioning over why something bad is occurring may reveal a heart that wants to control.

Choosing to remain mired in questioning God is a silent protest against His Providence in our lives.

- a. She really doesn’t believe that her father has the *strength* or *ability* to save her.
- b. She really doesn’t believe that her father fully *understands* the danger involved.
- c. She really doesn’t believe that her father has *good intentions* in telling her to jump.

Distrust is really an issue of *unbelief*. And unbelief arises from judging God and rejecting what He said.

A key part of God's work in our suffering often includes the struggle we undergo in not knowing all the reasons why.

"My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46). There was something He was crying out for in His darkest hour on the cross.

"My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will" (Matthew 26:39).

In order to be prepared for the fiery ordeal when it comes, ask yourself...

What will be my response when bad things happen?

Amos 7:17

In those intense moments and seasons of fire, will we be able to conclude with the psalmist?

"The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance" (Psalm 16:5-6).

Will we understand and accept that God has brought this fire into our lives to purify us as Job did?

"But he knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold" (Job 23:10).

Will we be able to say that affliction has come of no fault of our own, but to prove we belong to God?

"You have tried my heart, you have visited me by night, you have tested me, and you will find nothing; I have purposed that my mouth will not transgress" (Psalm 17:3).

"For you, O God, have tested us; you have tried us as silver is tried" (Psalm 66:10).

Will you remain steadfast in your faith, unwavering when trials come?

In the hour of our suffering, will we be found, "looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2).

"Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him" (James 1:12).