

The Fiery Ordeal

Steve Hereford, Pastor-Teacher

1 Peter / 1 Peter 4:12–19 . 5/22/22

INTRODUCTION

1. We are continuing with our theme of suffering this morning as we continue our study of 1 Peter
2. Please take God's Word and turn with me to 1 Peter chapter 4
3. Having concluded his discussing on the correct response to the coming of Christ, Peter now returns back to his theme of this letter...suffering
4. Listen to what he says in [1 Peter 4:12-19](#),

1 Peter 4:12–19 NASB95

¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you;

¹³ but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.

¹⁴ If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

¹⁵ Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler;

¹⁶ but if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.

¹⁷ For *it is* time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what *will be* the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

¹⁸ AND IF IT IS WITH DIFFICULTY THAT THE RIGHTEOUS IS SAVED, WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE GODLESS MAN AND THE SINNER?

¹⁹ Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.

5. In these 8 verses Peter returns to the theme of suffering
6. We hear it in the various terms he uses like “fiery ordeal,” “testing,” “sufferings,” “reviled,” “suffer as a Christian,” “suffering according to the will of God”
7. We as believers suffer as a result of following Jesus
8. [Philippians 1:29-30](#) says this is God’s will to “suffer for His sake”
9. When we obeyed [Luke 9:23-24](#), “23 And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. 24 “For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.”
10. This marked what the Christian life is all about
11. But sometimes we are surprised when we suffer for Christ
12. This was true of Peter’s audience

· So Peter begins this last section in chapter 4 by telling them to...

I. Stop Being Surprised by Suffering (vv.12-13)

“12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; 13 but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.”

· Why? Because...

- a. Persecution is according to the will of God
 - i. Peter says this in verse 19
 - ii. There are two phrases in verse 12 that indicates their wrong response to persecution:
 1. “Do not be surprised”
 - a. “do not” is the negative particle “me”
 - b. The word “surprised” (*xenizo*, *pres.pass.imp.*) means “to be surprised or astonished” (MacArthur)
 - c. This is a “continuing attitude of bewilderment and astonishment at what is happening” (Hiebert)
 - d. It occurs again in verse 12 as “though some strange thing were happening” which could be translated “a surprising thing” (MacArthur)
 - e. It occurred earlier in verse 4 as “surprised”
 - f. The use of the present tense indicates an action already going on

g. Adding the imperative “categorically prohibits a wrong response” (Hiebert)

h. The present imperative with the negative forbids the continued reaction

2. Charles Spurgeon said, “If you do not share in Christ’s humiliation, how can you expect to share in His exaltation? But if worldly people begin to rebuke and reproach you, take it for granted that they can discern something of Christ in you.”

b. Persecution is a normal part of the Christian life

i. James 1:2, “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when (“whenever” subj.) you encounter various trials”

ii. 1 Thessalonians 3:4, “For indeed when we were with you, we kept telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction; and so it came to pass, as you know.”

iii. Mark 10:28-30, “28 Peter began to say to Him, “Behold, we have left everything and followed You.” 29 Jesus said, “Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel’s sake, 30 but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life.”

c. Persecution comes from unbelievers because of their hatred toward you - 1 John 3:13, “Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you.”

d. Persecution is the result of a godly life - 2 Timothy 3:12, “Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”

e. Persecution varies in degrees of suffering

i. Some is more painful than others

ii. Some are only words

iii. Others are physical harm

iv. Peter calls this “a fiery ordeal” (v.12)

1. “fiery ordeal” (pyrosis, n), means ‘fire, burning’ (as in Rev. 18:9, 18)

2. The NIV translates it “painful trial”

3. Lenski calls it “fire-glow”

4. It is “a painful experience of persecution” (MacArthur)

5. All trials are distressing (1 Peter 1:6)

6. Peter probably has in mind the use of the word in Proverbs 27:21 (lxx), ‘Fire is the means of testing silver and gold.’ Because of this sense, the word could also be translated ‘refining fire’. The imagery is similar to that used in 1:7. (Grudem)

7. Peter probably wrote this letter shortly before or after the burning of Rome, and at the beginning of the horrors of a 200 year period of Christian persecution.

(MacArthur)

8. Nero had multitudes of Christians brought to his gardens and tied to stakes that he might light up his midnight revelries by the burning of these godly men and women smeared with pitch. They had to bear even that fiery trial for the name of Christ.

(Spurgeon)

f. Persecution is a form of testing your faith (v.12)

i. Regardless of the type of trial we experience, they are tests - [James 1:3](#), “knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.”

ii. The word Peter uses for “testing” (perismos, n) is the same word James uses in 1:2 for trials

iii. Suffering for righteousness’ sake not only refines but reveals whether people are truly believers (MacArthur)

g. Persecution causes you to share in the sufferings of Christ (v.13)

i. Their sufferings had brought them into closer fellowship with Christ’s sufferings—the sufferings that the Christ, the Messiah Himself—endured on earth.

ii. He endured unmerited suffering as the object of the world’s hatred.

iii. As His representatives to the world, the readers were in reality experiencing the same hatred (Hiebert).

iv. We fellowship in Christ’s sufferings when we suffer for his name’s sake, when the hatred that struck him strikes us because of him. (MacArthur)

v. Paul was told in [Acts 9:16](#), “for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake.”

vi. [Acts 14:21-22](#), “21 After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, “Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.””

· Since persecution, suffering, and trials are the will of God, and we are not to be surprised by it, how then are we to respond?

II. Keep on Rejoicing When You Suffer (v.13)

a. “keep on rejoicing” is the Greek word *chairō* (pres.act.imp.)

b. It is translated correctly showing the present tense action as ongoing

c. This is used in the active voice indicating you are constantly rejoicing

d. It is also a command indicating God's will for us when we're suffering

e. This is how we are to respond to suffering

The original order places the imperative "rejoice" emphatically at the end: "insomuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice" (ASV). (Hiebert)

› This is why James says....

i. [James 1:2](#), "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,"

ii. [Romans 5:3](#), "And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance;"

f. We rejoice now and at the revelation of Jesus Christ

i. The revelation of His glory will come in "the day that the Son of Man is revealed" ([Luke 17:30](#)), which refers to Christ's return. (MacArthur)

ii. It is through 'glorying in tribulation also' ([Rom. 5:3](#)) that the Christian is made ready for the joy that expands into fullness at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (Hiebert)

iii. Peter's second use of "rejoice" (chairō) is a reference to rapturous joy and is qualified by the word "exultation" (agalliao)

iv. Believers will "rejoice with exultation" when Christ returns

· Not only do you share in the sufferings of Christ when you suffer but you need to...

III. Realize You are Blessed When You Suffer for Christ (v.14)

"If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you."

a. If you are reviled for the name of Christ you are blessed

i. "reviled" (oneidizo, pres.pass.ind.) in the form of blasphemy (v.4). It means to "denounce," or "to heap insults upon." In the LXX, it described hostility heaped at God and His people by the godless" (MacArthur)

ii. "for the name of Christ" is the cause of evil hatred directed toward believers - [Matthew 10:22](#), "You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved."

iii. "blessed" (makarios, adj.) - refers to "a spiritually prosperous state or condition of the believer" (Wuest)

1. It means that they were to regard their condition or lot as a blessed one; not that they would find personal and positive enjoyment on being reproached and vilified. It

would be a blessed condition, because it would be like that of their Saviour.
(Barnes)

2. [Matthew 5:11](#), “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.”

b. You are blessed because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you

i. All believers have the Holy Spirit ([Rom.8:9](#))

ii. God’s Spirit gives supernatural relief in suffering

1. The word “glory” is a reference to the Shekinah which in the OT symbolized God’s earthly presence. The Spirit lives and ministers in all believers today

2. The word “rests” (anapauo, pres.mid.ind.) that Peter has in mind is the supernatural relief or refreshment the Spirit gives in the midst of their suffering

IV. Don’t Be Guilty of Suffering for Sin (v.15)

“Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler;”

Peter already said in [1 Peter 2:20](#) “For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.”

· **Make sure that none of you suffers...**

a. as a murderer (phoneus, n)

i. [Exodus 20:13](#), “You shall not murder.”

ii. [Matthew 5:21-22](#), “21 “You have heard that the ancients were told, ‘You shall not commit murder’ and ‘Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.’ 22 “But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, ‘You good-for-nothing,’ shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.”

iii. [1 John 3:15](#), “Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.”

b. or thief (kleptes, n)

i. [Exodus 20:15](#), “You shall not steal.”

ii. [Ephesians 4:28](#), “He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need.”

c. or evildoer (kakopoios, n)

- i. This is a general term, referring to anyone who works evil (Grudem) and therefore encompasses all crimes without exception (MacArthur)
- ii. It occurs 3 times in 1 Peter (2:12, 14; 4:15)
- d. or a troublesome meddler (allotriepiskopos, n), “an inspector of another; meddling with other people’s concerns,” “an agitator,” or “troublemaker”
 - i. [1 Thessalonians 4:11](#), “and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you,”
 - ii. [2 Thessalonians 3:11](#), “For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies.”
 - iii. [1 Timothy 5:11-13](#), “11 But refuse to put younger widows on the list, for when they feel sensual desires in disregard of Christ, they want to get married, 12 thus incurring condemnation, because they have set aside their previous pledge. 13 At the same time they also learn to be idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention.”

V. What to Do If You Suffer as a Christian (vv.16-19)

“16 but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name. 17 For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner? 19 Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.”

“but” (de, contrast) “if anyone suffers as a Christian” (christianos, not little Christs, but a follower of Christ, occurs 3 times in NT: [Acts 11:26](#); [26:8](#); [1 Pet.4:16](#)). It was originally a “derisive term” (MacArthur) but eventually was loved and adopted by followers of Christ.

· If you suffer as a follower of Christ, you are to do 4 things:

- a. Don’t be ashamed (v.16)
 - i. The Greek for for “ashamed” (aischyno, pres.pass.imp.) means “to be or become characterized by feelings of shame, guilt, embarrassment, or remorse” (LXGNTLEX)
 - ii. [Philippians 1:20](#), “according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.”
 - iii. [2 Timothy 1:12](#), “12 For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.”
 - iv. [Isaiah 50:7](#), “For the Lord God helps Me, Therefore, I am not disgraced; Therefore, I have set My face like flint, And I know that I will not be ashamed.”

b. Glorify God (v.16)

- i. “glorify” (doxazo, pres.act.imp.), translated “praise” ([Lk.4:15](#)), “honored” ([Mat.6:2](#)), “magnify” ([Rom.11:13](#))
- ii. It’s speaking of adoring or worshiping God ([Rom.1:21](#)) and giving Him praise
- iii. The sense is that the one being reviled as a Christian should so act and speak that God is continually honoured in his or her life. (Grudem)
- iv. [Matthew 5:16](#), “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

c. Remember judgment begins with the household of God (vv.17-18)

- i. Judgment is not condemnation but purging, chastening—purifying the church
- ii. If God so strongly and painfully judges His church which He loves, what will be His fury on the ungodly? (MacArthur)
- iii. The picture is that God has begun judging within the church, and will later move outward to judge those outside the church. (Grudem)
- iv. Peter says in verse 17, “What will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?”
 1. [2 Thessalonians 1:8](#), “dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.”
 2. [John 3:36](#), “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.””

v. What will become of the godless man and the sinner? (v.18)

1. This is [Proverbs 11:31](#), “If the righteous will be rewarded in the earth, How much more the wicked and the sinner!”
2. The fire of God’s holiness is so intense that even the righteous feel pain in its discipline. The impious (a godless person, a person without true reverence for God) and sinner will, by implication, find it to be a fire of eternal destruction. (Grudem)

d. Entrust your soul to a Faithful Creator (v.19)

“Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.”

Wayne Grudem asks, “What should Christians do in such circumstances? They should *do right*, maintaining moral purity in their lives (cf. 1:15, etc.), and should continue not to trust themselves but to *entrust their souls to a faithful Creator*. In this one verse is summarized the teaching of the entire letter. Christians do not suffer accidentally or because of the irresistible forces of blind fate; rather, they *suffer according to God’s will*.”

- i. Paul told Timothy in [2 Timothy 1:12](#), “For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.”
- ii. God is faithful and will accomplish His purposes in you - [Psalm 138:8](#), “The Lord will accomplish what concerns me; Your lovingkindness, O Lord, is everlasting; Do not forsake the works of Your hands.”
- iii. God comforts you in your trouble - [Isaiah 51:12](#), “I, even I, am He who comforts you. Who are you that you are afraid of man who dies And of the son of man who is made like grass,”

CONCLUSION

1. Are you trusting our faithful Creator who knows what is best for you at all times?
2. Are you seeing that persecution is to refine your faith and conform you to the image of Jesus Christ?
3. God loves and redeemed you and is at work in you
4. [Philippians 1:6](#), “For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”
5. Don't be ashamed
6. Glorify God
7. Remember you are blessed
8. God's Spirit comforts you
9. Keep on rejoicing
10. Stop being surprised when you suffer
11. Jesus suffered the greatest punishment for you
12. It was at the hands of His Father
13. [2 Corinthians 5:21](#), “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”
14. If you don't know Him today, call upon Jesus now
15. He is the Creator and Redeemer who will forgive all your sin
16. Repent and trust Him now
17. Let's pray