

How Can We Honor God in our Suffering?

[1 Peter 4:12-14](#)

1 Peter, Day 23

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.
- 1 Peter 4:12-14, ESV

Honestly, I don't like suffering of any kind. Physical pain is not something I enjoy, and emotional or social trauma are even less pleasant to me. So, when I hear the words "fiery trial," I don't think of something I want to experience.

Peter says we should not be surprised by fiery trials, and that we should rejoice when they come to us for being Christians. This is not something most of us can naturally embrace. We need help.

We get help in two ways when we read the Gospels: We see that Jesus suffered for us long before we were ever born or potentially called to suffer for His name. Also, we hear the words of Jesus telling us to expect suffering, telling us this is part of following Him:

"If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." - John 15:18-19, ESV

"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it." - Luke 9:23-24, ESV

While we may not enjoy suffering, we can honor God in our suffering in two key ways: by accepting it as His good will for us and by making sure that we're actually suffering for the right reasons. Suffering for the name of Christ takes many forms; here Peter highlights being insulted for His sake. Many people in the world have very little respect for followers of Jesus. As our American culture becomes more post-Christian and anti-Christian, being insulted for Jesus' sake is becoming a fairly common experience for Christians.

Peter says we should consider it an honor to be so insulted, for two reasons: It's an indication that the Spirit of God rests on us. In other words, it shows that we really belong to Jesus. It also is an indication that we will be blessed by His glory when He is revealed at His second coming.

And yet, we need to make sure we're really being insulted for being Christians and not for some other reason. Someone I know well used to work in the HR department of a major company in our area. Some Christians who worked for this company would come in late, leave early, not show up, do poor quality work, and then act like they were being persecuted when they were written up for poor job performance. That's not what Peter is talking about here in 1 Peter 4. We can't suffer for being irresponsible, obnoxious, or even for being overly political and think that's suffering insults for the name of Jesus. It's not.

I know some people who are New England Patriots fans, and they get teased for it by other football fans who don't like the Patriots. It's easy enough for them to take that teasing because their team has six championship trophies. They can smile and hold their heads up high, knowing their team is hated for good reason: They're the best. How much better is the Lord Jesus? How much greater is His kingdom than any sports dynasty? We should smile and hold our heads high when the world insults us for bearing His name. He is worth it!