

8.08.21 ~ 1Peter 4:12-19, Suffering for Christ

Read **1Peter 1:3-9**... Born-again, born from above, having received God's Spirit, made effectual through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we belong to God; therefore, the world [all that opposes or rejects God] hates us, because we don't belong to it and we don't engage in its depraved and corrupt lifestyles.

John 15:19, "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you."

Read 1Peter 4:12-19... When you come to God through Christ, you will begin to turn away from sinful attitudes and actions, as you turn from a self-centered life to one that is God-centered, seeking to please and exemplify the Lord. Leaving your old life behind, you begin to walk in the new life you have in Christ (cf. **2Corinthians 5:17**).

Water baptism serves as a model of this change that takes place in the lives of those who are genuinely born-again into the family of God (see **Romans 6:3-7**). In a sense, we have died and are buried in Christ (as symbolized when we are lowered into the water); we are also resurrected in Christ to new life (as is symbolized when we are raised up out of the water).

We are to live for Christ who died for us (**Galatians 2:20**), "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

We struggle to put the old life behind us, in order to live our new life in Christ.

Because we are in Christ and we seek to live for Him, we are hated by the world, by those who reject the authority and sovereignty of God (**1John 3:13**), "Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you." (**2Timothy 3:12**) "Indeed, all who desire to live godly [lives] in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

Peter says (**1Peter 4:12**) believers who are living for Christ should expect to be persecuted by those who reject Christ; we shouldn't consider it strange that we suffer through trials and tribulations because of the gospel of Christ. We suffer on behalf of Christ, because the majority of the world's people are offended by what God's Word says about gender, sexuality, marriage, sin, salvation, and judgment.

When the church suffers for Christ's sake, false believers leave the church; but true believers are refined, purified, and strengthened. When we are discriminated against and repudiated by the world (those who oppose and reject Jesus Christ as God's Son, Lord, and Savior), it serves to prove the genuineness of our faith and give evidence of our salvation (see **James 1:2-3**).

Read **1Peter 4:13-14**... Although it is not pleasant to consider that we will suffer on behalf of Christ; there is indeed a relationship between our suffering for Christ's sake and the glory we will experience in heaven.

Luke 6:22-23, "Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. Be glad in that day and leap *for joy*, for behold, your reward is great in heaven "

Jesus suffered on our account, it is only right that we be willing to suffer as we seek to honor and glorify the Lord; but, as we are insulted and scorned we should consider ourselves blessed, and even though we are persecuted for His name, we should be rejoicing.

When you are reviled [insulted, mistreated, slandered, even hated] you should remember that they also hated Jesus (**John 15:20**), "They persecuted Me, they will persecute you also."

But when you are insulted, mistreated, and persecuted, remember that you have God's Spirit, the Spirit of Glory, resting on you, giving you relief, refreshing you, encouraging and strengthening you. At the very moment of salvation, the Holy Spirit comes and takes up residence in you.

Ephesians 1:13-14, "In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory."

1Corinthians 6:15, "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?" **19**, "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?" [HS, Spirit of God, Spirit of Truth, Spirit of Christ]

1Corinthians 12:12-13, "For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit."

At the very moment of genuine repentance for sin, believing in Christ for salvation, the Holy Spirit marks us and indwells us, and places us into the body of Christ

1Corinthians 12:14, "For the body is not one member, but many." **18**, "God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired." **27**, "Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it."

Colossians 1:18, "He [Christ] is also head of the body, the church."

The Holy Spirit also provides us with godly attributes so that we can serve the Lord and love one another in a manner that is honoring to God (**Galatians 5:22-23**), "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, against such things there is no law."

When we suffer for Christ, God's Spirit gives us peace and strength, like provided to Stephen (the first Martyr) whose enemies stoned him to death, after he pointed out

their rejection of God's plan through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, David >> Christ (see **Acts 7:51-60**)

Read **1Peter 4:15-16**... Peter is telling us that we should expect to suffer in a world that is opposed to Christ and the message of salvation by grace; but he is also telling us that so-called Christians who live like unbelievers in lawlessness, committing crimes like murder and theft [in Christ's time these offenses were considered capital crimes, punishable by death], should not expect to receive relief, rest and restoration from God's Spirit.

But not only capital crimes are mentioned here, also evil doers (those who commit any unlawful crime), and troublesome meddlers (busybodies who stir up trouble by meddling in the affairs of others).

Christians are to be exemplary citizens, abiding by the laws, unless of course the laws demand that we do that which is not pleasing to God, or don't do that which God commands us to do. Christians are to be peace makers and models who influence others to honor God! We are to live out and to proclaim the gospel of Christ, to expose others to the kingdom of God.

If we meddle in the affairs of the godless world we may very well suffer, and we should not expect the Spirit of God to bless us. Our service is to God through Christ, not through the attitudes and activities of this world, e.g., political activism, social disobedience, and civil disturbance; for these may bring us into conflict with the governing authorities (see **Romans 13:1-2**).

It is God who is sovereign, not the President, not the Supreme Court, not the Attorney General, not the Governor nor the Mayor. If by doing what God commands we should suffer, we are not to be ashamed, or afraid, or discouraged; instead, we are to glorify God in the midst of our suffering by trusting in God to help us.

Suffering and struggling is part of our life experience and we will have times of distress and tribulation, sometimes we bring this upon ourselves, and sometimes it comes because of our witness for Christ.

Read **1Peter 4:17-18**... What does that mean? God loves His people, but when we sin, if we aren't repentant, God may very well punish us as His children. This is not talking about eternal condemnation (**Romans 8:1**), "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus," (**1Corinthians 11:32**), "But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world."

Peter makes a powerful statement here in the form of a question: If God in His righteousness is going to discipline [punish] His people, who are saved by the shed blood of Christ, what will happen to those who reject Christ, those whose sins have not been forgiven because they have rejected the only means of forgiveness, the only salvation provided by God (see **Romans 3:10-12, 23; 6:23; 5:8; 8:1-2; 10:9-10, 13**).

See **Daniel 12:1-2; Revelation 20:11-15**. Book of Life? See **Revelation 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27**.

Read **1Peter 4:19**... We must completely trust God in and through all the suffering and persecution we will experience in this life. **2Timothy 3:12-13** tells us, "all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted," while "evil men and impostors will proceed *from bad* to worse, deceiving and being deceived."

Look, as you live for Christ, serving God, you are going to suffer at the hands of evil men, false religions, organizations, institutions, and governments who reject the authority of God in Christ. Our response must be to entrust our souls, now and forever, to our faithful God, who is the Creator, Sustainer, Lord, Savior, and Judge over all. He will do what is right, for He alone is Righteous, He alone is Faithful, and He will see us through this life and bring us into the next, where we will spend eternity with God and with all those who believe in and belong to, Him.

Paul's words to the believers in Thessalonica, who were suffering persecution for Christ's sake, could just as well be written to us here in Waldport, or any other village, town, or city, where God's people are willing to suffer on account of Christ **2Thessalonians 1:5-12**, "This [persecution] *is* a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering. For after all it is *only* just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and *to give* relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed. To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and *the* Lord Jesus Christ."

1Thessalonians 5:15-18, "See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people. Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

2Thessalonians 3:16, "Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all!" **18**, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all."