

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

How to Deal with Your Trials

I Peter 4:12-19

1 One of the most difficult problems in the Christian life is how to deal with your trials. Why does God allow them to happen to His children who love Him? How should Christians react when they experience them? Our scripture should help us understand them a little better. Let's look at First Peter, chapter 4, verses 12 through 19. 2

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 3

If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God;

and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And, “If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?”. ⁴

So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

For some of you experiencing trials pulls you away from the Lord; where, for others, tragedy brings you closer. ⁵ So, what do you need to know to bring you closer to Him when trials come?

The first thing you need to know is that . . . ⁶

I. Holy People are Going to Suffer - v12

. . . holy people are going to suffer. Verse 12 says, Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. ⁷

It's not a matter of will you suffer, but when and to what degree. ⁸ Psalm, chapter 66, verse 10 says, **For you, O God, tested us; you refined us like silver.** ⁹ Again, in Isaiah, chapter 48, verse 10, **See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.** ¹⁰

Why? ¹¹ Because you are a foreigner in Satan's society. ¹² These are seen in the names Satan wears. **He is the ruler of this world.** ¹ **He is the god of this age.** ² **He is the prince of the power of the air.** ³ ¹³

¹ John 12:31.

² II Corinthians 4:4.

³ Ephesians 2:2.

Satan is in control of this world's society. First John, chapter 5, verse 19 says, **We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.**

Why? ¹⁴ Because you make non-believers nervous! It isn't popular to be honest, law abiding and generous. When you are, you stand out from the crowd and convict people making them feel uncomfortable.

The next thing to ask yourself is . . . ¹⁵

II. How Should You React

When You Suffer? - v13-16

. . . how should you react when you suffer? ¹⁶ God's word here says rejoice! What? Why! ¹⁷ Because you get to suffer for the Lord in return for Him suffering for you. Verse 13 says, **But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed**

when his glory is revealed. ¹⁸ The word "participate" ⁴ means to share, to have something in common. ¹⁹ In First Corinthians, chapter 10, verse 16, the Lord's Supper, the communion service we have in worship, is a "participation". ⁵ This is the same word! ²⁰ In Romans, chapter 15, verse 26, contributing to the offering is a participation. ⁶ ²¹

At your baptism you identify with the Lord and His gospel. Notice Romans, chapter 6, verses 3 and 4, verse 8 and verse 11, **Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life . . . Now if we died**

⁴ ΚΟΙΝΩΝΕΩ.

⁵ I Corinthians 10:16 - Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?

⁶ Romans 15:26 - For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution (participation) for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.

with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him .
. . In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but
alive to God in Christ Jesus. ²²

When the Lord returns, it will have been an honor to have suffered for His sake. ⁷ ²³

Another reason for rejoicing when you suffer is because His Holy Spirit will "rest" upon you. Notice verse 14, If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. This possibly refers to the Shekinah of God which may rest on those who have suffered for the Lord at the Second Coming. ²⁴ The Shekinah refers to the brilliant cloud that lead the children of Israel during the Exodus from Egypt to the Promised Land. ⁸
²⁵ It affected Moses on Mount Sinai so much that his face shown extremely bright. He had to wear a veil to

⁷ v13b - But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

⁸Exodus 13:21 - By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night.

keep from blinding the people who saw him.⁹²⁶ It appeared again at the Lord's transfiguration after Moses and Elijah appeared. The Lord's face shone brightly and a bright cloud enveloped them!¹⁰²⁷ In Acts, chapter 6, when Stephen was being martyred, his face was like that of an angel - possible very bright!¹¹²⁸

Verse 15 has a stipulation, **If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler.** Your suffering needs to be undeserved. It shouldn't be a natural consequence for making wrong choices or for bad behavior.²⁹

⁹ Exodus 34:19 - When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the LORD. Again in II Corinthians 3:7 and 13 - Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory . . . We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away.

¹⁰ Matthew 17:2 and 5 - There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. . . While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them.

¹¹ Acts 6:15 - All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

God wants you to wear the name Christian proudly. Don't be ashamed of that precious name! Verse 16 continues, **If you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.** You belong to the Lord and identify with Him by wearing that name.

This name clearly identified the people in the Bible with Christ. It appears three times in the New Testament. The other two places where it is mentioned are in the Book of Acts. ³⁰ Acts 11 tells us that Antioch is where they were first called Christians; ¹² and ³¹ in Acts 26 King Agrippa used that name when responding to Paul's witness to him. ¹³

So far we know that holy people are going to suffer and how we should react when we do. Now . . . ³²

¹² Acts 11:26 - The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

¹³ Acts 26:28 - Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?"

III. What is the Purpose for Suffering? - v17-19

. . . what is the purpose for suffering? ³³ Notice verse 17, For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? The first purpose, referred to here, is to test the genuineness of your faith. ³⁴ In fact, First Peter, chapter 1, verses 6 and 7 continue, In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith — of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire — may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ³⁵ Again, James, chapter 1, verse 3, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. ³⁶

Abraham's faith was tested in the Old Testament times. By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place

he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.¹⁴ ³⁷ Again, By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son.¹⁵

Lord Jesus tested people's faith to determine if they were genuine.³⁸ Two blind men approached the Lord requesting to be healed. He ignored them when they called Him "Son of David". They were asked about their faith.¹⁶ ³⁹ The Lord questioned the Canaanite woman's faith. Her answer, "Even the dogs eat the children's crumbs".¹⁷ So faith was tested.⁴⁰

Verses 17 and 18 give us another purpose for suffering, For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the

¹⁴ Hebrews 11:8.

¹⁵ Hebrews 11:17.

¹⁶ Matthew 9:27-30.

¹⁷ Matthew 15:21-28.

outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And, “If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?” This purpose is to make an obvious separation between the believer and the unbeliever. ⁴¹ The word “judgment” here ¹⁸ is the result of a decision, a verdict. ⁴² The persecuted, those who have obeyed the gospel, are barely saved by God's grace. ⁴³ So how could the persecutors, those who have not obeyed the gospel, have any hope for salvation if they haven't accepted the Lord. Obeying the gospel, accepting Jesus as Lord, is the only way to salvation. ⁴⁴ **Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ¹⁹ ⁴⁵ So, obedience to the gospel, plus God's grace, equals salvation!**

The third purpose for suffering is found in verse 19, ⁴⁶ **So then, those who suffer according to God's will**

¹⁸ κρίμα.

¹⁹ John 14:6.

should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good. It is to compel you to entrust your salvation to God! ⁴⁷ The word "commit themselves" ²⁰ means to place beside or set before. It's a technical term meaning to deposit money with a trusted friend; so to entrust. ⁴⁸ You must trust God for your salvation as you would trust your bank with your money! ⁴⁹

If you are really living your life for the Lord, you will probably suffer for Him in some way. Count it a privilege and rejoice!

<http://biblelifemessages.org>

²⁰ παρατίθημι.