

"The Believer's Suffering"

Part 1

1 Peter 3:13-5:14

Introduction: Last week in our study of 1 Peter we ended the section we called "The Believer's Duty". In this section we looked at how we are to live to glorify our Lord.

1 Peter 2:11-12

¹¹ *Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;*

¹² *Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

Peter then continued on to explain the 3 areas of life in which we are to live in submission.

1. Society
2. Work place
3. Home

Then he summed it all up and explained that believers are to seek unity, not pursue retaliation, and control their tongue if they desire to live a good life and enjoy their days. Peter then ended with a verse that sets the tone for what we are now about to step into.

Notice 1 Peter 3:12

We really focused upon the first part of this verse, and we briefly considered how the Lord is very aware of all that we face in life. There is not a time when a believer lifts his or her voice as they call to the Lord for help that He does not hear.

Psalm 38:9

⁹ *Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee.*

Unnamed writer:

"We cannot pray a prayer in secret, but He sees us; we cannot lift up our eyes to Him at midnight, but He sees us. The eyes of God are upon His people when they are in secret. His eye is a tender eye of love, that opens His ear, His heart, and His hand, for our good."

Getting back to verse 12, this verse sets the tone now for what Peter shall continue with.

I. The Proper Attitude in Suffering

Notice 1 Peter 3:13

Peter's question here is one in which he really does not expect an answer. The idea that Peter has here is that when we as believers live as upright citizens, when we live as upright employees and as we live in spiritual unity in the home who is going to harm us? Normally the answer is, "No one."

Normally when we as believers live upright lives it is then that our life of righteousness disarms the opposition.

Proverbs 16:7

⁷ When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

But there are exceptions. The Bible even teaches that the opposite can be true.

1 Timothy 3:11-13

¹¹ Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.

¹² Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

¹³ But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

Notice 1 Peter 3:14

There are those who are just set upon inflicting suffering upon God's people. With some people they will just not stop until the righteous are inflicted. When we do suffer for doing what is right, we are to see that as a privilege. That is the meaning of "happy" here.

Do not miss the qualifier here. It is to suffer "FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS SAKE."

How can Peter say it is a privilege? It is because with the suffering comes blessings.

Philippians 3:9-11

⁹ And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

¹⁰ That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

¹¹ *If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.*

There is a fellowship in sufferings that is not experienced apart from them.

Suffering prepares the believer for glory.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

¹⁶ *For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.*

¹⁷ *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;*

¹⁸ *While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

Revelation 2:10

¹⁰ *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*

Listen to the words of **Thomas Watson**:

"Afflictions work for good, as they make way for glory...Not that they merit glory, but they prepare for it. As ploughing prepares the earth for a crop, so afflictions prepare and make us [ready] for glory. The painter lays his gold upon dark colours, so God first lays the dark colours of affliction, and then He lays the golden colour of glory. The vessel is first seasoned before wine is poured into it: the vessels of mercy are first seasoned with affliction, and then the wine of glory is poured in. Thus we see afflictions are not harmful, but beneficial, to the saints"

Suffering must be viewed as an opportunity to receive spiritual blessings, not as an excuse to compromise the faith before a hostile world.

Romans 8:16-18

¹⁶ *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*

¹⁷ *And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*

¹⁸ For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

The glory that is revealed in us is the manifestation of Jesus Christ in us.

Notice 1 Peter 3:14 again.

We are NOT to be fearful which means we are NOT to be intimidated by those who would persecute us. The enemy will always use FEAR against the believer and when we allow fear to enter our hearts then we will abandon our post.

Acts 11:20-22

²⁰ And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the LORD Jesus.

²¹ And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

²² Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

Acts 12:1-3

Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.

² And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

³ And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)

Notice 1 Peter 3:14 again.

The word "troubled" here is very interesting and we need to see the meaning. It means, **"do not let your mind race back and forth in worry about what MIGHT happen."** It has the idea of NOT allowing your mind to stir up an inner turmoil.

How does a person counter this?

Notice 1 Peter 3:15a

The remedy is to "sanctify the Lord God in our hearts." The meaning here is very important. It means to sanctify Jesus Christ as Lord IN OUR HEARTS. There are many things that can lord over our hearts if we are not careful.

- Our own selfish desires.
- The opinion of others.
- Worldly wisdom.
- The pressure of circumstances.
- Fear of circumstances.
- The advice of false prophets.

When these are permitted to lord over our hearts, we turn away our complete allegiance to our one Lord.

Titus 2:11-14

¹¹ For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

¹² Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

¹³ Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

¹⁴ Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

In verse 14 we see that Jesus gave Himself for us so that He might purify unto Himself a peculiar people. The idea is that Jesus has purchased us for Himself, and He wants to be the Lord of our hearts.

So as we sanctify Jesus as Lord in our hearts then we listen to and follow Him no matter what we face and no matter how dangerous the situation may appear. Let me show you what this looks like in action.

Daniel 3:13-18

¹³ Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king.

¹⁴ Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?

15 Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.

17 If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

Notice 1 Peter 3:15b

When we sanctify Jesus Christ as Lord in our hearts then people will see the hope shining through our lives. When they inquire, we are to give an answer for the hope within us.

Now we must understand that if we are going to give an answer then we must know the Bible. We can not give an answer concerning something that we do not know about. Let me show you what can happen if you are not grounded in the Word.

1 Kings 22:19-23, 29

19 And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left.

20 And the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner.

21 And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him.

22 And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so.

23 Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee.

29 So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramothgilead.

Conclusion:

There is a need for believers who allow Jesus to be the Lord of their hearts and for the same people to know the Word of God. If not, you will buckle under the slightest bit of pressure.

Listen to the words of McGee;

"This means you ought to know more than a little about the Bible. The tragedy of the hour is that there are so many folk who say they are Christians, but the skeptic is able to tie them up into fourteen different knots like a little kitty caught up in a ball of yarn—they cannot extricate themselves at all. Why? Because of the fact that they do not know the Word of God."