

"The Believer's Suffering"

Part 7

1 Peter 3:13-5:14

Introduction: In our study of 1 Peter we are currently looking at the proper attitudes that a believer needs to have as we face suffering in this world. So far, we have looked at two attitudes which are needed.

1. An attitude of commitment.

Notice 1 Peter 4:1-2

2. An attitude of wisdom.

Notice 1 Peter 4:3-6

Tonight as we return to our text, we shall see two other attitudes that are needed if we are going to glorify our Lord when we suffer in life. Now, the specific suffering that Peter is speaking of in our text is suffering for righteousness. In other words, Peter is addressing how to respond when we suffer for doing what is right. It is expected that we will suffer when we do what is wrong. As believers we should expect that suffering will come when we do what God has called us to do.

2 Timothy 3:11-14

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.*

¹⁴ *But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;*

It is when we suffer for righteousness that we struggle, but it is then that we have a great opportunity to manifest Jesus Christ in our lives.

1 Peter 3:14

¹⁴ **But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;**

The word "happy" here means "fortunate, blessed, privileged." We are blessed when we suffer because it gives to us the opportunity to manifest our Lord to those who are watching. Now let us get to the next attitude.

3. An attitude of urgency and expectancy.

Notice 1 Peter 4:7

The statement, "The end of all things is at hand" has the idea that Jesus' return is imminent. The end of this age is imminent. Some would want to say that Peter was wrong when he said the end is at hand, but he did not mean it was going to happen soon, he meant it could happen at any time. He understood that the return of Jesus Christ is a sign-less event. This means that there is NOTHING that must happen before He returns. He can return at any time. There does not need to be wars, there does not need to be great deception, there does not need to be anything. We do not look for a certain sign to tell us He is coming soon.

This is why Peter writes these words. He wants to be sure that his readers were ready and prepared for the Lord's return. He wanted them to live every day in expectancy. Let us remember what Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-3

But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

² *For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.*

³ *For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.*

Then we see what Paul wrote to the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52

⁵¹ *Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,*

⁵² *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

Notice 1 Peter 4:7 again.

Peter tells his readers that because the end of the age is imminent, they were to be sober and to watch in prayer. The word "sober" means "to be of a sound mind, to exercise self-control." Notice the words of Hiebert on the word "sober."

"It denotes a condition free from every form of mental and spiritual loss of self-control; it is an attitude of self-discipline that avoids the extremes of the 'reckless irresponsibility of self-indulgence on the one hand, and of religious ecstasy on the other.' It instills a calm, steady state of mind that evaluates things correctly, so that it is not thrown off balance by new and fascinating ideas. Such 'level headedness' is a constant Christian need."

To be "sober/steady minded" today is a great blessing. There are many people today who are controlled completely by their emotions. They are either way up or way down. The place to be emotionally is in a place where the emotions are under control.

Peter also mentions that we are to also to be watchful in prayer. The believer who is calm in the midst of a chaotic world is a person who will have a steady consistent prayer life. Peter's statement brings to mind a question, "What are we to pray for when we are suffering?"

a. The Gospel to go forward and for deliverance.

2 Thessalonians 3:1-2

Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:

² And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.

b. Or our enemies to be saved.

Matthew 5:43-44

⁴³ Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

⁴⁴ But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

1 Timothy 2:1-4

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;

² *For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.*

³ *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;*

⁴ *Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.*

c. Spiritual strength.

Ephesians 3:14-19

¹⁴ *For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

¹⁵ *Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,*

¹⁶ *That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;*

¹⁷ *That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,*

¹⁸ *May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;*

¹⁹ *And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*

4. An attitude of love.

Notice 1 Peter 4:8

Peter now exhorts his readers to have "FERVANT" love among themselves. The word "fervent" means "stretched out or unending." It has the idea of a runner in a race focused on the finish line and stretching with all he has to reach it.

Notice the words of Barclay on Christian love.

"Christian love is not an easy, sentimental reaction. It demands everything a man has of mental and spiritual energy. It means loving the unlovely and the unlovable; it means loving in spite of insult and injury; it means loving when love is not returned. Christian love is the love which never fails and into which every atom of man's strength is directed."

This love only flows from a life that is not self-centered. It comes from a person who gives of his or her self to others. This person puts the needs of others first ahead of their own desires.

Paul taught of the importance of love in 1 Corinthians 13.

1 Corinthians 13:1-8a

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

² And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

³ And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

⁴ Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

⁵ Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

⁶ Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

⁷ Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

⁸ Charity never faileth:

Notice 1 Peter 4:8 again.

Peter reminds his readers that love covers a multitude of sins. When love is present in the fellowship of believers, offences are overlooked even when they are larger offences, and they are forgotten. Where love is not present every word is looked at with suspicion, many actions are questioned, and strife and conflict find a home. This is where divisions exist.

As believers we must do all we can to keep the unity within the body of Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 4:1-3

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

² *With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;*

³ *Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

Peter's readers were dealing with pressure from the unsaved world and the last thing they needed was pressure, stress and drama from inside the church. The church and the fellowship we have here should be seen as our safe haven. In here we are all one in Jesus Christ. We all should have the same goal and that is to glorify our Lord with all we do. Love should abound in the body of Christ. What we have here should be something that the unsaved world longs for because they will never find it in the world.

1 Thessalonians 4:9-10

⁹ *But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.*

¹⁰ *And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;*

Notice 1 Peter 4:9

With the love should also be hospitality. The word "hospitality" means "to be generous." This exhortation has a great deal of application today and it did in Peter's day. Peter's readers were suffering for being believers and many had lost all they owned. Peter is exhorting his readers to be mindful of the needs of their fellow believers and when there were needs, they were to be generous, and they were not to complain about it.

The same is also true for us. We live in a day when many people are struggling with the high inflation. They struggle to make ends meet. The Bible therefore exhorts us to help when we can help. I also know that some are hesitant to help because they do not know what tomorrow holds.

Ecclesiastes 11:1-6

Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.

² *Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.*

³ *If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.*

⁴ *He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.*

⁵ *As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.*

⁶ *In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.*

Notice 1 Peter 4:10-11

Peter now exhorts his readers to exercise their spiritual gifts. The gifts of the Spirit are given for the purpose of edifying the church. The church is especially in need of strengthening when it is under persecution and therefore it is so important that all of us are walking in fellowship with the Lord and exercising our gifts. This is what love does.

Conclusion:

When we step back and look at these proper attitudes that we are to have as we face suffering, we can clearly see that we need one another.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 25

⁴ *Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.*

⁵ *And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.*

⁶ *And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.*

⁷ *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.*

²⁵ *That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.*