

1  **The Honor of Suffering for Christ**

1 PETER 4:12-19

2  **We are in a spiritual war**

- ▶ There is suffering in war
- ▶ The culture war against Christianity and against life is upon us!
  - ▶ New York recently passed late term abortion laws; Vermont to follow
  - ▶ Proposed legislation in Texas to restrict rights of Christian business owners
- ▶ Our society is increasingly non-Christian and suffering is inevitable in our future. Are we prepared?

3  **Dean Cain – a real superman**

4  **Dean Cain on late-term abortions**

5  **“Ban the Bible” legislation in Texas**

6  **1 Peter 4:12-15**

*Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, when it takes place to test you, as if something strange were happening to you. 13 But to the degree that you share in the sufferings of Christ, rejoice, so that also at the revelation of his glory you may rejoice and be glad. 14 If you are reviled on account of the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 15 By all means do not let anyone of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler.*

7  **1 Peter 4:16-19**

*But if someone suffers as a Christian, he must not be ashamed, but must glorify God with this name. 17 For it is the time for the judgment to begin out from the household of God. But if it begins out from us first, what will be the outcome for those who are disobedient to the gospel of God? 18 And if the righteous are saved with difficulty, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner? 19 So then also those who suffer according to the will of God must entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing good.*

8  **Know that suffering is the Christian normal**

9  **Fiery trials were on the way**

- ▶ Peter knew the believers in Asia Minor would soon undergo hardships
  - ▶ He believed the suffering would be a painful fiery trial – a “burning” (verb *pyrōsei* is from *pyrōō*, “to burn.”)
    - ▶ Metaphorical (as in 1:7)
    - ▶ Literal – Nero had Christians covered in pitch and set on fire to light his imperial gardens at night

10  **Suffer, don’t retaliate (3:9)**

- ▶ Physical violence was not to be met by murder.
- ▶ Confiscation of property was not to be compensated for by theft.
- ▶ Christians should not even be meddlers (interfering in the lives of others or gossiping about them).

▶ 1 Timothy 5:13 (LEB) — *And at the same time also, going around from house to house, they learn to be idle, and not only idle, but also gossipy and busybodies, saying the things that are not necessary.*

11  **Rejoice in your partnership with Christ**

12  **Rejoice in your suffering**

▶ Why?

▶ *koinōneite*, from *koinōneō*, “to share”

▶ related nouns are *koinōnia*, “communion, fellowship, close relationship,” and *koinōnos*, “sharer”; cf. 5:1).

▶ Through suffering Christians further identify with Christ.

13  **The results of suffering with Christ**

▶ You receive a special joy -- “overjoyed, rejoice” in 1:6

▶ 1 Peter 1:6 (LEB) — *in which you rejoice greatly, although now for a short time, if necessary, you are distressed by various trials,*

▶ You enjoy fellowship with Christ

▶ Philippians 3:10 (LEB) — *so that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death,*

14  **The results of suffering with Christ (2)**

▶ You are glorified with Christ (Romans 8:17)

▶ Romans 8:17 (LEB) — *and if children, also heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer together with him so that we may also be glorified together with him.*

▶ The New Testament is clear that those who take part in the suffering of Christ also will take part in His glory, when it is revealed (apokalypsei; cf. 1 Peter 1:7; 5:1).

15  **The results of suffering with Christ (3)**

▶ You reign with Christ (2 Timothy. 2:12)

▶ 2 Timothy 2:12 (LEB) — *if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us;*

▶ Peter presented this truth as a cause for future hope and present rejoicing while enduring persecution.

16  **Suffer righteously**

17  **Suffering is a privilege, not a penalty**

▶ Matthew 5:1 (LEB) — *Now when he saw the crowds, he went up the mountain and after he sat down, his disciples approached him.*

▶ If a Christian was insulted (cf. 1 Peter 3:9) because of the name of Christ, he should be considered blessed (*makarioi*; cf. 3:14).

▶ 1 Peter 3:9 (LEB) — *not repaying evil for evil or insult for insult, but on the other hand blessing others, because for this reason you were called, so that you could inherit a blessing.*

18  **“The Spirit and glory of God”**

▶ Refers to the Holy Spirit’s indwelling presence within all who are identified by “the name of Christ” and thus suffer persecution (cf. 1 Peter 4:16).

- ▶ Isaiah 11:2 (LEB) — *And the spirit of Yahweh shall rest on him— a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of counsel and might, a spirit of knowledge and the fear of Yahweh.*
- ▶ Matthew 3:16 (LEB) — *Now after he was baptized, Jesus immediately went up from the water, and behold, the heavens opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove coming upon him.*

19  **Do not be ashamed in suffering**

20  **Suffering identifies us with Christ**

- ▶ Our suffering should be a source of praise to God for it identifies the bearer with the blessings of salvation (cf. v. 11).
- ▶ The term “Christian” occurs only three times in the Bible (here and Acts 11:26; 26:28). It may have been used derisively by unbelievers, as an insult.
  - ▶ Acts 11:26 (LEB) — *And when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. And it happened to them also that they met together for a whole year with the church and taught a large number of people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.*
  - ▶ Acts 26:28 (LEB) — *But Agrippa said to Paul, “In a short time are you persuading me to become a Christian?”*

21  **Glorify God**

22  **Suffering purifies us**

- ▶ Believers – as God’s children -- need disciplinary earthly judgments
  - ▶ Discipline is always hard
  - ▶ Being saved does not mean that we are free from temporal trials or discipline
  - ▶ The writer of Hebrews also supports Peter: *“Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons”* (Heb. 12:7).
- ▶ Even more, those who do not obey the gospel (cf. 2:7) the ungodly and the sinner, deserve everlasting judgment.

23  **Commit your soul to a faithful Creator**

24  **Follow the example of Christ**

- ▶ Believers could be sure that they were being called on to suffer according to God’s will (cf. 2:15; 3:17; 4:2) if, having committed no crimes, they were suffering solely because they bore Christ’s name.
- ▶ Just as Christ trusted Himself to His Father who judges justly (2:23), so should believers *commit to their faithful Creator and continue to do good* (cf. 2:15, 20).