

Passing Through the Furnace (1 Peter 4: 12-19)

- Contemporary westernized Christianity weakly reflects the New Testament
- Today it is still culturally fashionable to be a Christian & it doesn't cost much
- In the New Testament those who embraced Christianity were in real danger
- To be a Christian meant: Christ was everything, more precious than life itself
- When Christ is prized above all else persecution will follow: 2 Tim 3:12
- Peter's last section on suffering seeks to encourage his readers to take heart

I) Don't Be surprised by your Suffering (12)

- Peter's audience were surprised by their trial in the light of their gospel hope
- If Christ had been raised to life and given all victory why were they suffering?
- The suffering they were facing was fierce and intense: lit "fiery furnace"
- The word Peter uses to describe their trials: refiners furnace of extreme heat.
- Peter's encouragement is that their suffering speaks of hope not failure:
 - 1) *He says our suffering for Christ finds its significance in Christ suffering for us*
 - 2) *Our suffering does not destroy us, but it purifies us*

II) Don't Be Overcome By Your Sufferings (vs. 13-14)

- Vs 13 Peter encourages them to rejoice when facing fiery trials: 2 reasons
 - 1) *In our enduring of these sufferings, we participate in Christ's sufferings*
(Col 1:24; 2 Cor 1: 5-8; 2 Cor 4:8-12; 2 Tim 1:8; 2 Tim 2:9,10)
 - 2) *God has called us to share in Christ's glory when He returns. (cf. Isa 11:2)*
- vs 14 you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory & of God rests upon you**

III) Don't Be Ashamed of Your Suffering. (Vs.15-16)

- Sufferings that bring glory to God are not those that come from wrongdoing
But let none of you suffer as a murderer/a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler
- Peter: don't give those who do you wrong any reason to justify their evil

IV) Keep Doing Good, Commit Your Soul to God in suffering (vs 17-19)

- Vs 17-19 Peter speaks of the judgment of God: death as a result of sin's curse
- He speaks of judgment in the context of hope, he uses Malachi 3:1-3 & 4:1
- He picks up from 4:7 God visits his temple & purifies his people with fire
- Trials are God's means of purifying us making us ready for glory (1 Pet 1:7)
- If God's people enter in through many troubles what about the unsaved? (18)