

Arming Yourself Against Unjust Suffering

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1 Peter / 1 Peter 4:1-2

INTRODUCTION

1. We are beginning a new chapter this morning in our ongoing study of 1 Peter
2. So please take your copy of God's Word and turn with me to 1 Peter chapter 4
3. Today we are looking at the first 2 verses as Peter teaches in verses 1-6 about "Arming Yourself Against Unjust Suffering"
4. So that you have the entire passage in mind, I am going to read verses 1-6
5. Read [1 Peter 4:1-6](#).
6. We are in a spiritual battle
7. We entered that battle when we were saved
8. Prior to our salvation, we were engaged in the will of Satan, who is called the "god of this world," ([2 Cor.4:4](#))
9. He's the one who had blinded our eyes to the gospel
10. But God opened our eyes and drew us to Christ and released us from the bondage we had to Satan and made us His own
11. Now we are slaves of Christ and therefore slaves of righteousness
12. In [Revelation 1:1](#), believers are called "His slaves"
13. In [Romans 6:18](#), they are called "slaves of righteousness"
14. So that means as belonging to Christ, we live our lives to please our heavenly Father
15. That also means our lives are marked by obedience to Him
16. The Apostle John mentions our obedience in [1 John 2:3](#), when he said, "By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments."
17. *As we have been learning in 1 Peter, suffering for righteousness is God's will
18. It was His will for Jesus who, according to [Acts 2:23](#), was "delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, [and] nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men [who] put Him to death."

19. Since He suffered, so will we
20. Jesus said in [John 15:20](#), “Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.”
21. Four times in First Peter, he gives direct references to Christ’s suffering and death
 - a. We hear it in [1 Peter 1:11](#), when it says the prophets were “seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.”
 - b. We hear it in [1 Peter 2:21](#), when Peter says, “For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,”
 - c. We also hear it in [1 Peter 3:18](#), when Peter says, “For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;”
 - d. And now we hear it in [1 Peter 4:1](#).
22. So Peter continues his theme of suffering and he tells his readers they are to arm themselves too

· He begins verse 1 with pointing to...

Our Example (v.1a)

Who is our example? “Christ”

He says, “Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh”

1. “Therefore” refers back to 3:18 where it says, “For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.”
2. The entire section that begins in 3:18 and runs to verse 22 refers to the triumphant suffering of Christ
3. Peter brings that forward in chapter 4
4. Christ’s death was triumphant because it brought us “to God” by providing physical and spiritual atonement for our sins and it was triumphant over the “spirits now in prison” and Satan who also tried to prevent it
5. Peter says that between His death and resurrection, He made “proclamation” or proclaimed His triumph to them
6. So when Peter says in 4:1, “Since Christ has suffered in the flesh,” he is referring to Christ’s death on the cross

· That leads us to the main verb in verse 1 which essentially is...

A Command (v.1b)

Peter says to “arm yourselves also”

Just as Christ armed Himself, you need to arm yourself too

But what does he mean by “arm”?

1. The verb “arm” (hoplizo, aor.mid.imp.) occurs only here in the NT
2. It is a military term that speaks of preparation for battle
3. The noun form of this word (hoplon) is used in [2 Corinthians 10:4](#) to speak of “weapons”
4. Another form is used in [Ephesians 6:11](#) to speak of “armor”
5. The verb literally means “to arm oneself with weapons” or “to put on as armor”
6. Where else are we told to put on armor? [Ephesians 6:10-17](#).
7. This verb occurs in the aorist tense and calls for an act that demands resolution and determination
8. They needed to be resolute and determined to “arm” themselves for the battle
9. That’s the preparation they needed to make
10. This verb also occurs in the middle voice which tells us it was their personal responsibility to pursue this action
11. So this is a call for a “disciplined readiness to carry on their Christian mission” (D. Edmond Hiebert, 1 Peter, 257).
12. So as Christ suffered and died, you need to prepare yourself for suffering and ultimately death if God wills it so
13. Peter already gave how they were to imitate Christ in their suffering in 2:21-23 by not committing sin, or having any deceit in their mouth or reviling when reviled or threatening when threatened
14. Just as Jesus “entrusted Himself to Him who judges righteously” (2:23), you need to do the same

· So Peter says, “You’re in a battle and you need to be armed with this ultimate weapon.” What is this weapon? Peter says It is...

An Attitude (v.1c)

Peter wanted them to “Arm [themselves] also with the same purpose”

1. The word “purpose” (ennoia) is translated “attitude” in the NIV and it means the “same mind, the same idea, the same principle, the same thought”

2. You need to arm yourself with the same principle that was manifest in the suffering of Christ
3. What was that?
4. [Philippians 2:5](#), “Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,”
5. The “attitude” that Paul talks about here is the mind of humility
6. He “humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” ([Phil.2:8](#))
7. In other words, Jesus was “willing” to die for our sin
8. Jesus said in [John 10:11](#), “I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.”
9. We too must be “willing” to die or “lay down” our lives like Christ when we suffer and died
10. That is the ultimate of persecution
11. Instead of trying to escape persecution, we must willingly accept it
12. Even if it means we die
13. But even in death, you can triumph like Christ did
14. That’s what Peter wanted his readers to see
15. Christ was willing to die and you need to arm yourself with that same idea, that you too are willing to die, because you understand that in dying, there is triumph
16. The only alternative is to recant by denying Christ
17. Peter wants his readers to understand that some of them are going to be martyrs, so they needed to arm themselves with that same thought
18. They needed to be willing to die for righteousness sake, because it can be triumphant
19. The potential for death marks the Christian life
20. Jesus said in [Matthew 5:10-12](#), “10 “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. 12 “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”
21. We have been reading and praying for the persecuted church and what have we been learning? They are being martyred and they are “willing” to be martyrs for Jesus
22. Remember Jesus said in [Luke 9:23-24](#), “23 And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. 24 “For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.”

23. What does it mean to “take up his cross daily” but to be willing to die
24. Paul said he died “daily” in [1 Corinthians 15:31](#).
25. He demonstrated that in [2 Corinthians 6:4-10](#), when he said, “4 but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, 5 in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger, 6 in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, 7 in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left, 8 by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; regarded as deceivers and yet true; 9 as unknown yet well-known, as dying yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death, 10 as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things.”
26. In [Acts 16:22-24](#), Luke says he was “beaten with rods”, “struck...with many blows” and thrown “into prison”
27. He referred to this in [1 Thessalonians 2:2](#) as suffering and mistreatment
28. In chapter 3, he talked about being hindered by hostile men from “speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved” (v.16)
29. He said this hindrance was from Satan in verse 18
30. Ultimately he was beheaded
31. And prior to that he said in [2 Timothy 4:6-8](#), “6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; 8 in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.”
32. He was ready to die
33. And he was “willing” to suffering anything for Christ
34. He said in [Philippians 1:21](#), “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.”
35. What about you?
36. This is the greatest weapon you possess
 - a. The worst anyone can do to you is kill you
 - b. From your viewpoint that is the best they can do
 - c. With that mindset you have ultimately thwarted them
 - d. Many martyrs throughout history armed themselves with the same idea
 - e. They were “willing” to die for Jesus
 - f. There is great triumph in death

g. Jesus died and triumphed over sin and so will you

· At the end of verse 1, Peter mentions...

The Believer's Triumph (v.1d)

He says, “because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin”

1. The phrase “suffered in the flesh” is the same phrase used earlier
2. It means physical “death” like it did in the beginning of verse 1
3. This is where the passage gets difficult
4. Some believe that it is referring to our identification with Christ in His death
5. [Romans 6:3-7](#), “3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; 7 for he who has died is freed from sin.”
6. I admit it sounds good but it doesn't help with the next phrase, “ceased from sin”
7. Though we are identified with Christ in His death, we still sin
8. When will we stop sinning? When we suffer in the flesh and what does that mean? When we physically die
9. That's what the phrase meant at the beginning of verse 1 when referring to Christ
10. He “suffered in the flesh”
11. The triumph for the believer is at death because at death he has now “ceased from sin”
12. The word “ceased” (pauo, perf.pass.inf.) means to “stop” or “finish”
 - a. It refers to a cessation of sin
 - b. It's used in the perfect tense to emphasize a state or condition which is a “definite break with sin” (Hiebert)
 - c. At death you enter into a condition, a permanent, eternal state free from sin
 - d. This is what we are trying to do our whole Christian life...not sin
 - e. At death it is gone!
 - f. So if you have the idea in your mind, if they kill you, you're going to be where you're trying to get, free from sin, that eliminates all fear

- g. All the threatening is gone out of persecution
 - h. When a believer dies, he enters a permanent condition free from sin
 - i. Christ is the model of that
13. This was true of Christ
 14. He wasn't a sinner and never sinned but He came into a world, according to [Romans 8:3](#), in the likeness of sinful flesh
 15. And He came not only in the likeness of sinful flesh, but for sin.
 16. And then He subjected himself to evil men doing wicked things to Him, so He felt the brunt of sin
 17. And then on the cross, [2 Corinthians 5:21](#) says He was made sin and [1 Peter 2:24](#) says, He bore our sin
 18. He came in the likeness of sinful flesh
 19. He came to receive the worst evil that sinful men could do to Him
 20. He went to the cross and was made sin and bore sin, but when He died, He was free from sin
 21. And all of that which He suffered in His incarnation came to an end
 22. He was no more in the likeness of sinful flesh
 23. He had a glorified body
 24. He will never again be subjected to the evil deeds by evil people and demons
 25. He will never again bear sin, it was once for all
 26. And so Christ also, in his death ceased from sin
 27. He has nothing more to do with it
 28. It has nothing more to do with Him
 29. And so, Peter says, arm yourselves with the same thought
 30. You want to have the ultimate weapon, then understand when you die, you are free from sin forever. (John MacArthur, sermon: The Memory that Shuns Sin, Pt.1 - <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/60-39/the-memory-that-shuns-sin-part-1>)
 31. But while you're here you have sin at work in your members or in your flesh
 - a. [Romans 7:5](#), "For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death."

› That's why Paul also said in...

- b. [Romans 7:18](#), “For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.”
 - > He also said in...
- c. [Romans 7:23](#), “but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.”
 - > Jesus even said in...
- d. [Mark 7:21](#), “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries,”

32. What does the entire Bible tell us about sin? To stop it!

33. But that is difficult to do while you are in this flesh

34. It’s not until you die that you get that imperishable, honorable, glorious, powerful spiritual body

- a. [1 Corinthians 15:42](#) says we are “sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body”
- b. [1 John 3:2](#), “Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.”
- c. That’s what were waiting for!

· So with that thought in mind, Peter says in verse 2 that you need to be armed with this same idea because of what you’re to do...

Here and Now (v.2)

“so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.”

1. This is what he has been saying up to this point

- a. In [1 Peter 1:13-17](#) he told them to “prepare [their] minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, 15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; 16 because it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” 17 If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth;”
- b. In verse 22 he called them to “a sincere love of the brethren, [by] fervently love one another from the heart,”

- c. In the first two verses of chapter two he called for them to put “aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, 2 like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,”
- d. And then in verse 11 he called them to “abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. 12 Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation. 13 Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, 14 or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. 15 For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. 16 Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God. 17 Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king. 18 Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable.”
- › Even when he was referring to how Christ responded when He was being persecuted so were they. He said in...
- e. [1 Peter 2:21-23](#), “21 For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, 22 who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; 23 and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously;”
- f. In chapter 3 he called for the wives to “be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives,”
- g. And then in verse 7 he called for the husbands to respond “in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.
- h. Then in verse 8 he summed it all up by telling all of them to “be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; 9 not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing. 10 For, “The one who desires life, to love and see good days, Must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit. 11 “He must turn away from evil and do good; He must seek peace and pursue it.”
- i. And finally in verses 15-16 he called for them to “sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; 16 and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.”

2. This is why you want to be armed with this idea

3. The goal of your life is sinlessness not “the lusts of men” but you’ll never reach it until you die but in the meantime you live for the will of God
 - a. The word Peter uses for “lusts” (epithumia) is a strong word that refers to a strong desire
 - b. The context determines its use, whether it is a good or bad desire
 - c. It occurs in [1 Timothy 3:1](#) of a good desire but in [James 1:14](#) of an evil desire
4. So we no longer live for “the lusts of men”
5. That is a universal truth in the NT
 - a. [Titus 3:3](#), “For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.”
 - b. [Ephesians 4:22](#), “that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit,”
 - c. [2 Timothy 2:22](#), “Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.”
 - d. [Romans 13:13-14](#), “13 Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.”
6. We have laid aside the old self, we continue to flee from youthful lusts and now we pursue “the will of God”
7. The Scriptures specifically tell us what is God’s will
 - a. The will of God is your sanctification
 - i. [1 Thessalonians 4:1-3](#).
 - ii. [Ephesians 5:17-18](#), “17 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,”
 - iii. [Galatians 5:16](#), “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.”
 - iv. [Colossians 3:16](#), “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”
 - b. The will of God is your submission
 - i. To civil authority ([1 Pet.2:13-15](#))
 - ii. To employers ([1 Pet.2:18](#))

iii. To spouses ([1 Pet.3:1-7](#))

iv. To one another ([1 Pet.3:8](#); [Eph.5:21](#))

c. The will of God is your suffering ([Phil.1:29-30](#))

CONCLUSION

1. Until we die and enter heaven, our life is swallowed up in the will of Him who saved us
2. We live here and now in a holy manner of life
3. Peter already said in [1 Peter 1:15](#), “but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior;”
4. He said in [1 Peter 2:12](#), “Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.”
5. Our being persecuted should never be on account of our sin but for righteousness sake
6. And if we are persecuted for righteousness sake, we must “arm” ourselves with the same idea Christ had
7. Our eye is on the triumph that is ours where we cease from sin and are made perfect in heaven
8. With those thoughts the threat is gone
9. Because that is the worse they can do to us, it is the best thing that can happen to us
10. Peter has now disarmed our fears in sharing Christ with unbelievers
11. If the worse they can do to you is kill you and that means you’ll instantly be in heaven, why should we fear?
12. But if you’re not a follower of Jesus, there is a reason to fear, not man but God
13. Jesus said in [Matthew 10:28](#), “Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”
14. Maybe you’re here today and you have not surrendered to Christ
15. You can right now
16. Believe in Christ, repent from your sin and call on Him right now to save you
17. Embrace Him and the work He did for you when He suffered and died for you on the cross
18. Let’s pray