

1 Peter 4:12-19

Verse 12

The previous verse has just described the glory and dominion of God which lasts forever and ever. Peter now addresses something that may seem strange to the chosen exiles, suffering. The thing that he wants them to know is that suffering is not strange in their lives, and they should not be surprised when it comes.

It may seem strange to some that God with all glory and dominion in this universe would allow suffering to come upon His children. Why would He do this? Does this make God unfair? Why is there suffering in the world? Why is their suffering that comes upon the believer if we are His children?

Do we deserve to have a life of no suffering? Have we merited anything for suffering to bypass us? How arrogant of us to think that we have done anything for suffering to not come to us. Suffering came upon the suffering servant, Jesus. His suffering was with a purpose and so is the suffering that comes in our lives. We are not greater than Him and if He suffered, we should not be surprised when it comes in our lives.

If we got what was due us, we would be suffering this very second in hell for our arrogant sin against God. However, instead of making His elect suffer in hell forever, which is what we deserve, He rather shows us mercy and then brings suffering our way to refine us to conform us more to His image and to have an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison as a result of this light affliction(2 Corinthians 4:16-18).

Peter makes one thing clear to these exiles. He lets them know that suffering is not strange and suffering should not surprise them. The purpose of the suffering in the life of the believer is for testing and refining their faith (1 Peter 1:6-7). God loves His children and cherishes their faith so much that He brings suffering with a purpose to their lives to refine their faith like gold is refined.

What may seem even more strange is that despite God being the Savior and Father of His believers, it often appears that the wicked suffer less and even prosper, while His children are called to a life of suffering. What should our attitude toward this be?

● Psalm 73-Read

Verses 13-16

We share in the suffering of Christ in regards to the fact that as Christ suffered for the sake of righteousness, we too His believers, will suffer for the sake of righteousness as He did. Romans 8:17, states *“and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.* We are to rejoice in the fact that He has considered to not only be united with Him in His death and resurrection, but also in His suffering(Matthew 5:10-12)(John 15:18-20). These sufferings are temporary and are producing in His people an eternal glory that will be revealed on the final day. In the middle of suffering and persecution, God is blessing His children through His Spirit. They are not suffering unjustly, but as a result of the sovereign decree of God. Through the ordained suffering of His people, He is working all things for good according to His will. The Bible tells us that all those who desire to live godly lives, will be persecuted (2 Timothy 3:12). Those who are reviled and persecuted for the name and sake of Christ are blessed because God and His glory rests on them because they are truly His children and have suffered in the flesh with Him. It will be on the Last Day when we are free from sin, pain, and suffering, we will rejoice with great exultation.

Verses 17-18

Judgment begins in the house of God is referring to suffering and afflictions that is brought about for the chastening and discipline of His people. It is in these afflictions and suffering that the child of God will be disciplined and changed to be more conformed to the image of God. Sometimes God uses affliction and sufferings as means of discipline and purifying to His people. This chastening and discipline is out of love. Judgment begins with God’s people as a result of His love for them.

The fact that judgment, suffering, and afflictions come to God’s children should terrify every unbeliever. The judgment that Christians go through, although painful, is for sanctification. Trials are to purify His people (1 Peter 1:6-8). If He brings judgment to His chosen people, how much more will the wrath and judgment of God come to those on the Last Day and throughout eternity.

Verse 18 does not mean that God has difficulty saving or rescuing people and securing their eternal salvation, but rather implies that in this life until the fulfillment of our salvation on the Last Day, there is difficulty, suffering, judgment, and tests that will be present in

the life of the believer. These trials, tests, and suffering sometimes cause great difficulty in their lives. If these difficulties and suffering come upon His adopted children, then we can only imagine the wrath and judgment that will come upon the godless sinners.

- **1 Corinthians 11:32** But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world.
- **Hebrews 12:5-10** and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are reproved by Him; ⁶ For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives." ⁷ It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom *his* father does not discipline? ⁸ But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. ⁹ Furthermore, we had ^[a] earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of ^[b] spirits, and live? ¹⁰ For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He *disciplines us* for *our* good, so that we may share His holiness.

Stewards of suffering, called to suffering

We all have been called to various roles and positions in life including our vocations. When we go through suffering, we must understand that in that season of life, our job that we are called to is to suffer for Christ. We are to be a good steward of what God has given us, even if what He has given us is suffering. Let us be good stewards of the suffering of God to rejoice and be thankful to Him, to be an example to the world in the middle of the suffering, and to grow in sanctification.

Verse 19

When we suffer it is according to the will of God. If suffering was not of God, we would have no hope since that would mean that God is not sovereign over all things. The fact that suffering is by the will of God should give all believers comfort and hope as to know that it is for good by His will.

The response of every believer in the middle of suffering is to entrust their souls to their faithful creator. The suffering of Christ was from the Father and this suffering pleased the Father. The suffering of Christ was for a purpose and our sufferings can't be compared to the level of suffering of Jesus. After the intense suffering that came upon Him by the Father, Jesus committed His Spirit back to the Father (**Luke 23:46**) who was the One who sent Him and caused Him to suffer. We are to entrust our souls to God who is faithful in all things, including suffering.

The only way that suffering makes sense is that it is from God and if it is of God, then it is good. If God is not sovereign over suffering, then He is not God.

- **Job 1:21-22** He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." ²² Through all this Job did not sin nor did he ^[a] blame God.
- **Job 13:15** "Though He slay me, I will hope in Him. Nevertheless I will argue my ways ^[a] before Him.

It is hardest to trust Him when trials and suffering are on us. We feel the weight of the sufferings, but we must remember that God is good and faithful and the sufferings of this present time are not to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed in us (Romans 8:18).

The glory that will be revealed will be in our eternal home and all suffering, tears, mourning, death, and pain will be gone (Revelation 21:1-7). We will know every trial, judgment, and suffering was worth it!