

From the Cross to the Crown 4

1 Peter 4

Introduction

- A. 1 Peter Was Written to Christians Who Where Suffering Persecution
- B. Peter Refers to Christians as Saved, Separated, Submissive Suffering, and Steadfast
- C. In A.D. 66 the Jews Rebelled Against the Roman Lords, but by A.D. 70 Nearly All Opposition Was Crushed
- D. After the Roman Army, under Titus, Defeated / destroyed Jerusalem, the Jewish People Throughout The Empire Suffered - Because Christianity Had Grown up in the Cradle of Judaism, Christians, Whether Jews or Gentiles Were Regarded Jews
- E. It Is Against this Background That Peter Gives the Admonitions That Suffering Can Be Expected, Can Be Easier, and Suffering Can Be Endured
- F. What of Us Christians Today? Can We Expect to Suffer Because of Following Christ?

I. Suffering Can Be Expected - 1 Peter 4:1-6

A. Christ Suffered for Us in the Flesh - Verse 1

- 1. Jesus Suffered for Us in Flesh by Giving His Body and Blood as an Atonement for Our Sins

B. Christians Can Expect to Suffer If They Arm Themselves with the Same Mind - Verse 1

1. What Does this Mean - Philippians 2:5

- a. Mind - Thought, Notion, Manner of Thinking or Feeling
- b. Christians Are to Be Influenced by the Same Purposes. Thoughts and Intentions Which Characterized Christ Himself

2. Note New Testament Examples

- a. Stephen - Acts 7
- b. Apostles
- c. Paul - 2 Corinthians 11:23

3. Those Who Suffer Persecution for Their Faith Find the Appeal of Sin to Them Lessened - Verse 1

- a. As Fire Burns Away Impurities from Precious Ore, and Leaves the Pure Metal, So the Fiery Trials of Persecution Clear Away Fleshly Lusts
- b. Christians Who Come Through Fiery Trials of Persecution with Their Faith Unshattered - Hope Stronger, Will Dedicate Their Remaining Years to a Fuller, More Fervent Service to God

C. But Why must These Sufferings Come - Verse 3

1. Christians to Whom Peter Wrote Had Been Heathens, Who Had Been Involved in a Life Filled With Immoralities

- a. Very Worship of Heathens Involved Acts of Immorality - Fornication - Homosexuality - Drunkenness
- b. No Moral Code Was Attached to the Religion of Worshiping Idols
- c. The Old Champions Would Not Understand this Change - Verse 4
- d. They Could Not Understand Why Christians Would No Longer Participate with Them. After All, to Them, Religion and Morality Were Completely Divorced from One Another

D. But These Same Heathen Who Reproached the People of God Would Not Escape Punishment - **Verse 5**

E. Does **1 Peter 4:6** Give Man a 2nd Chance?

II. Suffering Can Be Easier - **1 Peter 4:7-11**

A. Suffering Can Be Easier If They Keep a Sound Mind - **Verse 7**

1. Does the End of All Things Mean the End of World - Judgment

a. In Context, Peter Was Writing Only a Few Years Before the Destruction of Jerusalem. The Destruction of this City Would Unleash a Severe Persecution Against God's People

b. It must Be this of Which the Inspired Penman Writes

2. In Light of this Serious Persecution Christians Would Need to Have Their Wits about Them - **Verse 7**

a. Sober - Be of Sound Mind - to Be in One's Right Mind - to Exercise Self Control - to Put a Moderate Estimate upon One's Self Soberly - Curb One's Passion

b. Shows the Need for Constant Communication with the Heavenly Father Through Prayer

B. Suffering Can Be Easier If You Keep a Warm Heart - **Verse 8**

1. Fervent - Stretched out - Continual - Intense

2. Charity - Love

3. Would Need Even Stronger Love for One Another than Usual - A Love That Would Suffer with Brethren in Christ - That Would Unselfishly Give of Time & Means to Help Those in Need as a Result of Persecution - A Love That Would Be Willing to Forgive a Brother's Trespasses

C. Suffering Can Be Easier If You Keep Open Houses - **Verse 9**

1. Love Will Prompt Christians to Gladly Offer the Hospitality of Their Homes to Fellow Christians Deprived of a Home and Livelihood by Persecutors, Remembering That They Are to Be Stewards of God's Gracious Gifts, Not the Originators, or Owners of Them

2. In Our Day, Hospitality Seems to Be a Fading Practice

a. **Romans 12:13**

b. Hospitality Should Characterize Every Child of God

1) They Should Gladly Share Their Food & Lodging with Fellow Christians, and Even Strangers as Opportunities Arise

c. But Many Are Either Too Lazy, or Feel Too Busy to Show Hospitality to Others

d. Thereby Rob Themselves of Opportunities to Show Brotherly Love, Enjoy Christian Fellowship, good Influence

D. Suffering Can Be Easier If You Keep a Ready Hand - **Verse 10**

E. Suffering Can Be easier If You Keep a Truthful Tongue - **Verse 11**

1. Peter Has Just Referred to Gifts

2. Oracles - Divine Utterances Delivered Through Recognized Agencies of the Early Church

3. Christians Today Do Not Receive Such Directly, but Have the Inspired Word of God as Standard of Authority

III. Suffering Can Be Endured - 1 Peter 4:12-19

A. If You Keep Your Perspective - Verse 12

1. Persecution Was Not to Surprise Christians

- a. John 15:20
- b. 2 Timothy 3:12

2. Persecution Not Strange to Christianity, but Inevitable Consequence of Faithful Adherence to it

B. If You Keep Your Peace - Verse 13-14

a. Christians Should Not Murmur or Complain, but Rather Rejoice in Persecution

C. If You Keep Your Purity - Verse 15

D. If You Keep Your Right Attitude - Verse 16

E. If You Keep Your Poise - Verse 17

1. Not Judgment at End of World - Verses 17-19

2. Reference Is to Severe Trials Coming Soon

3. If God Allowed His People to Suffer, Those Who Had Not Obeyed the Gospel Were Expected to Suffer More

4. Matthew 24:1-35 - Remembering Jesus Prophetic Words

5. In All the Storms of Life We Can Trust in God, Knowing He Will Ever Care for Us, and That Ultimately in Him We Are More than Conquerors

Conclusion

A. Encouragement from 1 Corinthians 10:13

1. Common
2. Conditional
3. Conquerable

B. What Will Our Suffering Yield for Each of Us

C. Ask Yourself this - Will My Suffering Make Me a Better Person or a Bitter Person

D. Invitation