



“Entrusting Souls to a Faithful Creator”

1 Peter 4:12-19

Sermon Date: January 31st, 2016

Reflections on Sunday’s Sermon

Prayer

As you begin your study this week, ask the Lord to prepare your heart for suffering as a follower of Christ. Ask Him for the strength to continue to do good and live honorably in the midst of any and all circumstances as you entrust your soul to Him, the faithful Creator (v. 19). As you pray, consider the following words of this Puritan prayer taken from The Valley of Vision and make them your own before the Lord.

*“O Lord...Help my soul to breathe after holiness,
after a constant devotedness to thee,
after growth in grace more abundantly every day.
O Lord, I am lost in the pursuit of this blessedness,
and am ready to sink because I fall short of my desire;
Help me hold out a little longer, until the happy hour of deliverance comes,
for I cannot lift my soul to thee if thou of thy goodness bring me not nigh.
Help me to be diffident, watchful, tender, lest I offend my blessed Friend,
in thought and behavior;
I confide in thee and lean upon thee, and need thee at all times to assist and lead me.
O that all my distresses and apprehensions might prove but Christ’s school
to make me fit for greater service
by teaching me the great lesson of humility.”*

Scripture

1 Peter 4:12–19 – (English Standard Version)

12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. 14 If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. 16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. 17 For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 And

*“If the righteous is scarcely saved,
what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?”*

19 Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

Handling the Word

1. Take a few minutes to get yourself re-acquainted with the book of 1 Peter. Using whatever resources you have available to you, write out some key facts about the book that are helpful to know and remember (for example: who wrote it, to whom did he write it, when was it written, what was the purpose for writing it, etc.)
2. Also by way of review, read through the passages we have covered thus far in 1 Peter (1:1-4:11). Try to recall some of what you have learned in those passages and write down any common themes and/or teachings that Paul has drawn our attention to.
3. It has been said that verse 19 of our text this week serves as a sort of summary of the entire book. Would you agree or disagree with that statement? Explain your answer and support it with specific references.

Understanding and Applying

1. Peter opens this passage in verse 12 by reminding believers that there is no reason to be “surprised” when facing trials “as though something strange were happening.” In fact, followers of Christ are told in many places throughout Scripture to expect suffering, trials, and persecutions in their lives (Matthew 10:24-25, John 15:18-20, 2 Timothy 3:12). Although we read these things and know they are true for us on some level, why is it that we are sometimes still surprised and shocked when it happens? How do we avoid the experience of being surprised by our suffering?
2. Also in verse 12, Peter refers to the sufferings that the believers in that day were facing as “fiery trials.” What does that description teach us about the nature of the attacks that will be launched against believers? Is this description reason to despair? Why or why not?
3. According to verse 14, we have great reason to rejoice when “insofar as [we] share Christ’s sufferings.” Commentator Max Anders described what is meant by sharing in Christ’s sufferings this way: “Believers share in the suffering of Christ in the sense that through suffering they identify with Christ. To be a disciple involves suffering like the Master. Christ as Lord and His believers as disciples are bonded even further through the experience of suffering.” What do we learn from the suffering of Jesus Christ that should lead us to rejoice when we are further united with Him in our suffering?
4. Why is it possible for Peter to make statements like: suffering is a reason for believers to rejoice (v. 12), believers are “blessed” when they are insulted or suffer for the name of Christ (v. 14), and believers should glorify God when they suffer as a Christian (v. 16)? What are the blessings of suffering that we experience both in the present (James 1:2-4) as well as the future (Matthew 5:10-12, Luke 6:22-23)?
5. Since it is clear, according to this passage along with many others, that all believers will experience trials in this life, how do we stay focused on the product of our suffering rather than focusing on the pain of our suffering? Why can it be so difficult to see this in the middle of our trials?
6. According to verse 15, there is a type of suffering we want to avoid, and that is the suffering brought about by our sinful actions. While the distinction is not always that clear in our lives, can you think of times where you know that you brought suffering upon yourself due to your sinful actions? What did that look like?

7. In verse 16, the Christians in Peter's day were encouraged to glorify God rather than being ashamed in their suffering. What about suffering for Christ can make believers feel ashamed? Why is there ultimately no shame in being persecuted for the name of Christ?

8. It seems as though Peter recognized that it might be tempting for believers to grow envious of those who persecute them, as the persecutors at times appear to prosper while God's beloved suffer. What does Peter remind them of in verses 17-19 in order to combat that temptation (also refer to Psalm 73:18-20, 2 Corinthians 4:16-18, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8)?

9. In the closing verse of this passage, we are reminded that we will suffer "according to God's will" (v. 19). Is knowing that you are suffering according to the plans of Him who rules with sovereignty over all things a comfort to you? Why or why not?

10. In light of all that has been said about suffering in Peter's letter, he encourages all followers of Jesus to "entrust their souls to a faithful Creator" (v. 19). Take a minute to think about and describe what it looks like to entrust your soul to the faithful Creator (also refer to Psalm 31). Why is entrusting ourselves in this way a source of great joy in suffering?

11. How does "doing good" while in the midst of suffering demonstrate a heart that has been truly entrusted to Jesus Christ (v. 19)? How does Jesus serve as an example of this for us?

12. What do you feel that the Lord has been teaching you through His Word this week?

"Mark then, Christian, Jesus does not suffer so as to exclude your suffering. He bears a cross, not that you may escape it, but that you may endure it. Christ exempts you from sin, but not from sorrow. Remember that, and expect to suffer."

C. H. Spurgeon