

Introduction

- Christians are often wrecked by the by the fiery trials that come upon us to test us.
- How do we not get blown off course? But remain strong and steadfast in Christ all our days?
- We want to grow, to be strong and vibrant in faith that keeps getting...
- As trials come, entrust your soul to God and do good.

1. POINT 1.

- a. "Beloved." Important address for sufferers.
- b. Command, "Do not be surprised." How could this happen to me? Caught off guard.
- c. We anticipate one thing but get another (same as in 4:4).
- d. These words are given to prepare us; "*when* it comes upon you."
- e. Being surprised can hurt us spiritually.
 - i. Spend a lot of time on "How could this happen?"
- f. "Fiery trial or ordeal." Idea of a furnace used to purify metals (dross). "Burning among you."
- g. Comes upon us to test us (the community). Individual and community. Test our quality.
- h. These fiery ordeals will come upon us to test us as a fire tests metal. Will test our hearts.
- i. We shouldn't think this is as strange, unheard of, unknown, etc.
 - i. Abel (1st martyr), Joseph, Esther, early churches, Reformers, pilgrims, Chinese house churches, etc.
 - ii. Jesus. "No servant is greater than His master."

POINT 1: TRIALS ARE NOTHING NEW.

2. POINT 2.

- a. V. 13. "But rejoice." Contrast with "do not be surprised." The positive command.
- b. Peter's words are in agreement with Paul's (Phil. 3:10-11). Rejoice.
- c. What are we rejoicing in? Not trial itself but being with Jesus. It's a privilege. We are counted with Him. *Illustration – Civil rights movement-Selma bridge.*
- d. Jesus identifies with His people so intensely; we "share in His sufferings."
- e. If we share now in His sufferings. Rejoice that we are blessed to be counted with Jesus. To be part of His crew. We will also rejoice and be glad when He returns, and His glory revealed.
- f. Notice it's "His sufferings" and "His glory." To be part of God's people, Jesus must come first.

POINT 2: REJOICE AS YOU SHARE IN CHRIST'S SUFFERING THAT YOU MAY REJOICE WHEN HE COMES, AND HIS GLORY IS REVEALED.

3. POINT 3.

- a. V.14. Jesus taught us in Mt. 5:11. We are blessed.
- b. The fiery trial that came upon Peter's audience and will come upon us are attacks from people on the outside. Peter specifically addresses verbal attacks. Insults. Mocking. Ridicule.
- c. Where do many experience insults and ridicule for faith in Christ? Family and friends.
 - i. Husband insults wife's faith. Wife insults husband's faith. Father to children. Children to parents.
 - ii. Also, culturally. Shows that mock Christianity like 30 Rock.
- d. Insults, ridicule, mocking's *for the name of Christ*. He was reproached. So, when we are, we share in His suffering.

- e. "If I am suffering for bearing His name 'Christian' then it's because He chose me. I am rolling with Christ."
- f. Why or how are we blessed? Favored by God? He is with us. His Spirit rests upon us. He makes His home with us.
- g. We are blessed, God shows us grace and His favor by coming and being with us.
- h. Insults, ridicule, and mock invite shame. We shame others in this way. Force them to conform.
- i. Many don't want to be associated with someone enduring public insult, ridicule. Don't want to be isolated by association. God doesn't back away from us. He comes to be with us.
- j. If others come to our aid, we feel a sense of glory. God's spirit brings glory where we might feel shame from our culture or family.

POINT 3: IF YOU'RE INSULTED BECAUSE YOU IDENTIFY WITH CHRIST, THEN YOU ARE BLESSED BECAUSE GOD IS WITH YOU.

4. POINT 4.

- a. V.15-16. Don't suffer, face pain, and judgement over sin.
- b. We don't always suffer because we are in the right. Sin hurts.
- c. Peter includes major sins and minor sins like meddling in the affairs of others. His point – we can sin in a whole host of ways. And suffer pain, broken relationships, punishment.
- d. Sin brings shame. We are often or should be ashamed of sin. Our sins can be very public. Disgracing God's name.
- e. There is suffering we should avoid, self-inflicted suffering due to our own sin.
- f. Most of us look to avoid suffering at all costs. For some, even suffering for Christ, would be avoided. There's such a strong desire not to experience suffering of any kind.
- g. If we suffer as a Christian, we should not be ashamed.
- h. "Christian" term given by outsiders, a label.
- i. "Let him not be ashamed." To understand this passage, you have to see the implicit references and ties with the themes of shame and glory.
- j. Most people seek glory. When we are ashamed, we are not experiencing glory.
- k. We cannot be about our glory and God's glory.

POINT 4: DON'T SUFFER FOR SIN BUT IF YOU SUFFER AS A CHRISTIAN, DON'T BE ASHAMED AND GLORIFY GOD.

5. POINT 5.

- a. Vv.17-18.
- b. Verse 17 comes from Peter. Verse 18 is the Septuagint's (Greek translation of the Hebrew) from Proverbs 11:31. Peter makes use of a widely accepted and used Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible in his day. Isn't that cool? Even the apostles made use of translations. While going back to the original languages is of immense benefit. Reading, quoting from, making use of, and studying from translations that are faithful to the original languages is completely fine. Even Peter used translations.
- c. The Hebrew of Proverbs 11:31 reads, "If the righteous is repaid on earth, how much more the wicked and the sinner!" whereas the LXX translation of Proverbs 11:31 reads, "If indeed the righteous is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and sinful appear?" We will come back to this shortly.

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- d. So far, Peter is saying that the beloved, Christians will experience fiery trials or ordeals. Both individually and as a community. That these trials will come upon us and test us. What do these fiery trials look like? People from the outside will attack us. Insult us. Ridicule us. Mock us. These trials will test us, to see what we're made of. To test the genuineness of our confession.
- e. Will we share in Christ's sufferings, rejoicing that we are with Jesus? When we suffer for being a Christian, will we hold fast to our confession and glorify God? Or will we turn away from Him? Be ashamed? Will we cling to Him or abandon Him in these trials?
- f. These trials come to us according to God's will (v. 19). Nothing happens outside of His permissive will or divine command. Verse 17, says "for it is time for *judgment* to begin at the household of God." We often think of judgement as condemnation for sin. But this can't be what's meant here. Why? Because Romans 8:1 says, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." This isn't condemnation on Christians for their sin because there is no longer any condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. Rather this "judgment" is a "decision." It's the result of the judging process, a judgment. What's the judgment? That the people of God should experience fiery trials that come upon us to test us. That we should share along with Jesus in His sufferings. But that we should also share in His glory. That we should suffer insults, ridicule, and mock. Why? To test us.
- g. Churches are filled with many who confess to believe and follow Jesus. These trials force us to choose, is it my glory or God's glory? Am I willing to suffer shame and reproach like Christ? Share in His sufferings with Him? Or am I unwilling to suffer shame? Is my glory most important? So, I'll turn away from God and be ashamed of Him.
- h. God permits these fiery trials to come upon His people to test them. To purify His people. 1 Peter 1:6-7, "In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."
- i. God uses these fiery trials to separate the nominal Christians from those who truly belong to Him. His desire is that there would be one true people for His name.
- j. That judgement begins now for us. Always begins with God's people. Peter borrows from Malachi 3, where the same kind of judgment began at the temple. There's no longer any physical temple. Now we are His temple. We are the household of God. The point of the temple was true worship. That all could come to know and worship God by interacting with His people. The people of God represent God to those on the outside. God's desire is that all the nations would come to know Him and how He plans to make that happen is through the church. Yet, some join for social reasons. Maybe become leaders. Yet, their wrapped up in sin. Involve others in the community in sin. Soon, the local church is no longer a place people can come to find, know, and experience God. It's too polluted with sin. Accepts racism, people are partial, those with money get more of a say, church politics occur. Outsiders get disgusted and walk out. God's will is that suffering should come. It purifies His people. Our love for Jesus is tested. So then, like the metal placed in the furnace, it's pulled out purer. More costly. More attractive. Of more value.
- k. Fiery trials are actually needed for good evangelism. They protect and enhance the local church's witness. All those who were okay with sin, okay with serving 2 masters, okay with their glory before God's, they're gone. Those left are those with a united heart for God.
- l. So, Peter makes the point that if God permits this "fire to come among" His people, then what will become of those who disobey the gospel of God? The good news that all those who repent or turn away from sin and turn to God will be saved. What will become of those who disobey the gospel, the ungodly, and the sinner? If God permits this kind of fire among us, what will happen to the sinner who never repents and believes the gospel? A final lasting complete judgment. Proverbs

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11:31 in the LXX says literally, “where will the ungodly and sinful appear?” Going back to the image of precious metal in a fire. What was put in wasn’t made of any metal? It all burned up. It failed to appear back out of the fire. The fire consumed it. God’s judgment is a fire. Unless you obey the gospel, turn from you sins and believe in Jesus, you will not appear back out of the fire. God’s judgment will be total and consuming.

- m. Jesus said in Matthew 10:28, “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”
- n. Ultimately, what we find is that those apart from Christ might insult us, try to shame us. But if we are not ashamed but glorify God, we will not experience shame but they will, and we will rather experience everlasting glory – sharing in Jesus’ glory.
- o. I believe that Peter says this to encourage us not to fall away. To persevere in the faith.

POINT 5: GOD USES SUFFERING TO MAKE A PEOPLE FOR HIS NAME.

6. POINT 6.

- a. V.19.
- b. Peter almost anticipates that we will say, “Yes, I want this for my life. I don’t want to be surprised when fiery trials come upon me to test me. I want to rejoice in that I share in Christ’s suffering. Being insulted like Him. I am with Him. I want the Spirit of God to rest on me. I don’t want to be ashamed and be about my glory. I want to bravely wear His name, Christian. I want to bravely be under His banner. To glorify God. I don’t want to be Christian only in name. I want to be for real and genuine. I don’t want to be consumed by God’s judgment. BUT THERE’S NO WAY I CAN DO THIS. I’M NOT STRONG ENOUGH. I’M NOT GREAT ENOUGH. OR POWERFUL ENOUGH.
- c. This is why Peter says, “Therefore, let those who suffer according to God’s will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator.”
- d. We are entrusting our souls to God for safekeeping. The idea is entrusting something to someone with the intention of preservation. Jesus used the word on the cross when He said, “Father into your hands I entrust my spirit.” My wedding ring has special significance. When Sarah and I were dating, I would give her this ring before I left back to college. I entrusted her with it, for safekeeping, to preserve it. To remember me too. We are to entrust our souls to God that He would preserve them.
- e. Notice Peter uses “Creator” to speak of God. And He describes Him as “faithful”. He is the faithful Creator. Peter did this for a reason. Creator reminds us that God is in control. He’s sovereign. He made all things. He sustains all things. He designed His creation with purpose. So too with us, His people. He is sovereign. He made us a people. Brought us together into one. He will sustain us. He is faithful to us. He will watch over you. Take care of you. He has a purpose and design for His church and for you, Christian. Even the suffering that has come upon you or us. He knows what He is doing. He’s all powerful. He’s all good.
- f. You can’t preserve yourself, only God can. We must entrust our souls to Him. He will preserve us as we enter the fiery ordeals, that we come back out. Purified. Stronger.
- g. We are to entrust our souls to God while doing good.
 - i. Peter finished his thought here. It would be easy to entrust our souls to God and say, “Hey He’s got me. I’m just going to relax.” No, we must entrust while doing good.
 - ii. What’s “doing good.” That’s broad. In essence it’s obeying or living out God’s design for our lives as revealed in Scripture. It’s loving God and others fully and truly. Specifically, here, it’s rejoicing as we share in Christ’s suffering. Not being ashamed of Christ but glorifying God as we go through suffering, and it’s entrusting our souls to God.

POINT 6: IF YOU ARE SUFFERING FOR BEING A CHRISTIAN, ENTRUST YOUR SOUL TO GOD AND DO GOOD.

Conclusion

- Consider the author of the letter. The apostle Peter. Consider his life.
- Jesus' word about disciples leaving Him. Peter's response. Jesus' response to Peter.
- Peter knows something of when fiery trials come upon us to test us.
- Peter writes this letter to provide words of encouragement and guidance.
- Don't let your past shame shut you out from sharing in Christ's glory.
- Like Peter, your story isn't finished. Like Peter, turn back and strengthen your family.
- How is this possible? Because you're beloved.