**1 Peter: Trials Designed to Test Character, Pt 2**

1 Peter 4:12-19

**Context**

Peter has repeatedly been counseling these dispersed believers with this letter to help them think rightly about the suffering they are enduring.

**1:6-7***—In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials,****7****so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;*

**2:11-12***—Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers 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.*

**2:19***—For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.*

**3:8***—To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit.*

**3:14***—But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled.*

**3:17***—For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.*

**4:1***—Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.*

**5:10***—After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.*

Persecution has always been prevalent in the life of the church. Christ repeatedly warned His disciples that they would face it.

**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.*

But there is a way to suffer well for the sake of righteousness. Here, Peter is telling us to keep the right focus.

**1 Peter 4:12-19**—*Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you;****13****but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.****14****If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.****15****Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler;****16****but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.****17****For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?****18****And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner?****19****Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.*

**4 thoughts on the Power within Suffering**

1. **Do not be Surprised**

**12** *Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you*

* Expect it
* God allows it to test us
* It purges our lives for greater holiness
* Like refining gold, it removes the dross in our lives
* It proves the genuineness of our faith
* A righteous life is not welcome in an unrighteous culture

1. **Keep on Rejoicing**

***13****but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.****14****If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.*

* Rejoice in it with exultation
  + Present motivation—our suffering is not unlike our Savior, we bear His reproach (insults) and we are blessed in that His Spirit rests on you
  + Future motivation—you will share in His glory at His unveiling
* We share Christ’s sufferings
* “The name of Christ”
  + It’s not simply that we bear the name of Christ
  + It was the proclamation of the name of Christ

**Acts 4:12**—*And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.*

* The Spirit of God rests on us

1. **Suffer for the right things**

**15***Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler;****16****but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.****17****For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?****18****And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner?*

1. Do not do the wrong thing so as to suffer
   1. *Murderer*—a murderer (always of criminal (or at least intentional) homicide)[[1]](#footnote-2)
   2. *Thief*—an embezzler, pilferer[[2]](#footnote-3)
      1. Both a murderer and thief were capital offenses in the ancient world
      2. If you’re an offender, don’t expect a grace from God
   3. *Evildoer*—an evil doer, malefactor[[3]](#footnote-4)
   4. *Troublesome meddler* (allotriepiskopos)—one who takes the supervision of affairs pertaining to others and in no wise to himself, a meddler in other men's affairs[[4]](#footnote-5)
      1. Christians are not to be troublemakers in any setting
      2. Including our society and workplace

**1 Thessalonians 4:11**—*and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you*

**2 Thessalonians 3:11-12***—**For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies.****12****Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread.*

**Evaluative question:** If I am suffering, why? Am I suffering because of natural consequences of choices or is for the sake of righteousness? If I am suffering for wrong, a Christian should be ashamed.

1. Don’t be ashamed in suffering for Christ
   1. Such suffering brings the Spirit’s blessing
   2. Don’t be ashamed or disheartened
2. *Glorify God in this name*

**4:11b***…so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

* 1. **Q:** What name?  **A:** The name of Christ
  2. Christian—initially a term of derision given with hatred and persecution

**Acts 11:26***—and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And for an entire year they met with the church and taught considerable numbers; and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.*

**26:28***—Agrippa replied to Paul, “In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian.”*

* 1. Early followers of Christ called each other brethren, saints, and those of “the Way,” but later warmly embraced the term “Christian”
  2. We belong to Christ
  3. Our lives are to center on glorifying God
     1. We praise Him for the privilege and honor of suffering
     2. Considering His work for us, our suffering is far less
     3. Suffering purifies His church

1. Judgment begins with the Household of God

**Romans 8:1***—Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

**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.*

* 1. The time of judgment began on the cross when our sins were judged in Christ
  2. The season of judgment for the believers is now
     1. Peter is not talking about condemnation
     2. Peter is speaking of purifying, purging, and testing His own
     3. God is fitting us (if you will) for the kingdom
     4. Shaping us into Christlikeness
  3. Household—here referring to the family of God, of the Christian Church, of the church of the Old and New Testaments[[5]](#footnote-6)

**Galatians 6:10***—So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.*

**Ephesians 2:19***—So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household*

**1 Timothy 3:15***—but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.*

**Hebrews 3:6***—but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.*

**10:21***—…**and since we have a great priest over the house of God…*

1. If we are to be judged first, what will be the outcome for unbelievers?

For if God, the righteous Judge, so hates evil, and must deal with it, that He judges His redeemed people, what will be the fate of unbelievers, when His full wrath against sinners is revealed? Or, if the justified sinner who is seeking to do God’s will is saved only with difficulty, because through judgment, and with inevitable pain and loss, what will be the end of the ungodly and sinful, who is doubly wrong, both in his heart attitude to God and in the evil practices of his life?[[6]](#footnote-7)

* 1. Judgment begins with Christians
  2. With difficulty

**Hebrews 12:7-8***—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.*

**Acts 14:19-22***—But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.****20****But while the disciples stood around him, he got up and entered the city. The next day he went away with Barnabas to Derbe.****21****After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch,* ***22****strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, “Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.”*

**2 Corinthians 12:7-10***—Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself!****8****Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me.****9****And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.****10****Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.*

**2 Thessalonians 1:5-9***—This is a plain indication of God’s righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering.****6****For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you,****7****and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire,****8****dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.****9****These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.*

* 1. Judgment concludes with Christ’s final condemnation of the ungodly at the GWT

**Revelation 20:11-15**

(Cf. **Matthew 7:21-23; 25:44-46**)

* 1. It is much better to people to endure suffering with joy now as believers being purified for effective testimony and eternal glory than to later bear eternal torment as unbelievers[[7]](#footnote-8)

**Luke 16:19-31**—The Rich Man and Lazarus

**Proverbs 11:31**—*If the righteous will be rewarded in the earth, How much more the wicked and the sinner!*

1. **Entrust your Soul to God**

***19****Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.*

1. *Those who suffer according to the will of God*

This is the deduction which those who suffer are to make and to act on.[[8]](#footnote-9)

* 1. Not all will have to suffer
  2. According to “*the will of God*” is the determinate
     1. Suffering first on the house of God—purifying
     2. Then on the ungodly—damning[[9]](#footnote-10)

1. *Entrust* (paratithēmi)—to place alongside, i.e. present (food, truth); by implication, to deposit (as a trust or for protection)[[10]](#footnote-11)

**Luke 23:46**—*And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.” Having said this, He breathed His last.*

1. *Faithful Creator*
   1. This is the only place in the NT where this phrase is used
   2. God is the Author of everything; Designer of all that is; the One who sustains not only His material creation but achieves His purpose for it all[[11]](#footnote-12)
   3. It would make sense that the One who made is also able to sustain
2. *Doing what is right*
   1. God always does what is right; He defines right
   2. He never does what is not right
   3. God is faithful in Himself and to all that He says including His promises
   4. As such, believers can rest confidently that He will do what He has said

**1:3-5**—*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,****4****to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,****5****who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

**John 10:27-30***—My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;****28****and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.****29****My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.****30****I and the Father are one.”*

**17:11-12, 15***—I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are.****12****While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled….****15****I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one.*

**Romans 8:35-39***—Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?****36****Just as it is written, “For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”* ***37****But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.****38****For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,****39****nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

**Ephesians 1:13-14***—In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,****14****who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory.*

**Philippians 1:6***—For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*

**Conclusion**

The Lord has not promised us exemption from crushing disappointments, pain, bereavement, or persecution. Any one or all of them could come. If they do, don’t be surprised or perplexed. Accept them as part of Christianity, and call upon God’s strength to endure.[[12]](#footnote-13)

**Psalm 31:1-5**—*In You, O Lord, I have taken refuge;  
Let me never be ashamed;  
In Your righteousness deliver me.****2****Incline Your ear to me, rescue me quickly;  
Be to me a rock of strength,  
A stronghold to save me.****3****For You are my rock and my fortress;  
For Your name’s sake You will lead me and guide me.****4****You will pull me out of the net which they have secretly laid for me, For You are my strength.****5****Into Your hand I commit my spirit;  
You have ransomed me, O Lord, God of truth.*

**Source**

Most of the message and notes come from:

Richard W. DeHaan, Good News for Bad Times: 1 Peter

R.C.H. Lenski, The Interpretation of I and II Epistles of Peter, the three Epistles of John, and the Epistle of Jude

John MacArthur, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1 Peter

John MacArthur, The Fiery Trial, Part 2, 1 Peter 4:15-19, Jan 28, 1990, gty.org

Jerome H Smith, The New Treasure of Scripture Knowledge

# Alan M. Stibbs, The First Epistle General of Peter (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries)

[www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org)

1. Strong’s G5406 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Strong’s G2812 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Strong’s G2555 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Strong’s G244 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Strong’s G3624 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Stibbs, 163. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. MacArthur, 256 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Lenski, 213. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Strong’s G3908 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. MacArthur, 259. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. DeHaan, 123-124. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)