

## Christian Suffering (#01)

Peter writes to believers scattered all about the Roman Empire. He writes to answer questions about suffering and He writes to correct false ideas about God's plan

### Questions: If God loves me, why does He allow me to suffer hardships and adversities?

- If my life is filled with adversity, doesn't that mean I am doing something wrong?
- Spiritual children want everything to go right and for life to be prosperous & pleasant.

### False Ideas:

- If I do what God wants, He will in turn give me what I want;
- God loves me and wants me to be happy, so He will give me prosperity if I obey Him;
- If I believe enough, God will give me whatever I ask.

**Why does God allow us to suffer?** What are we to think about suffering and what are we to do in response to it?

### **There are three (3) Categories of Suffering for the Believer:**

- **SIM;**
- **Divine Discipline;**
- **Sharing the suffering of Christ**

[Suffering references: 1:6-9; 2:19-25; 3:13-14; 4:1-2, 12-19; 5:6-11]

### **Peter's Principles of Christian Suffering**

#### **1. Christians can know joy in earthly suffering by adopting an eternal perspective.**

**1Pet 1:3-6** born again to a living hope, an incorruptible inheritance and a salvation ready to be revealed in the last times; in this you greatly rejoice in spite of various trials.

God's mercy **ἔ** born again **ἔ** (a) eis .....(b) eis ..... (c) eis .....

- eis – result, the achievement of a purpose – God's purpose for regenerating us in Christ

**Vs 3 praise** to GF for His mercy that has caused us to be born again – **regenerated**

(a) eis – unto a **living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead

- **hope - elpis** – confidence in the future; certainty that we too will be resurrected

**Vs 4 inheritance**, incorruptible, undefiled, unfading, guarded in heaven by God's power

(b) eis – an inheritance – incorruptible, undefiled, not fading away

- **Inheritance – kleronomia** – acquisition of property by succession; Roman law said a child was an heir from the moment of birth & an active participant in the family assets.
  - **incorruptible** – no decay/death; 1Cor 9:25 incorruptible crown – permanent crown
  - **undefiled** – w/out the corruption caused by sin – sinless and pure
  - **unfading** – everlasting, eternally fresh, permanently in full bloom
- Kept secure in heaven for you the ones being guarded by the power of God through faith

**Vs 5 guarded** by the power of God; salvation ready to be revealed

(c) eis – unto a **salvation** ready to be revealed at the last time

- salvation – the whole picture of our eternal blessing with God in heaven
- This salvation will be fully revealed at the rapture and then the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ.

**Vs 6 greatly rejoice**; even though for a little while; grieved by various trials

- A. God gives all bel's lesser blessings (time) and greater blessings (eternity).
- B. Spiritual growth enables us to hunger for the greater more than the lesser.
- C. Peter describes the greater blessings God has for every believer in Christ.
  - Living hope; incorruptible inheritance & a salvation ready to be revealed
- D. These blessings are permanent and far outweigh any suffering possible in this life.
  - Rom 8:17-18 the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed to us in the eternal state.
- E. Knowing the greater is waiting, we can be content with the loss of the lesser.
- F. Sharing Christ's sufferings by using truth increase the greater – rewards
  - 1Pt 4:13 – to the degree you share His suffering, rejoice, at that time extreme rejoicing
- G. We can endure extreme hardship in time knowing that what waits on us in heaven is far greater than any suffering we could possibly endure in time.

**2. Bel's can rejoice in adversity knowing that proving the validity of God's word by trusting it under pressure results in praise, glory and honor in eternity 1Pt 1:7.**

1 Peter 1:7 that the proof of your faith, more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise, glory, honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

Proof – **dokimion** – test the purity of gold; prove something to be genuine; prove out

Faith – your faith – a) to believe, attach your faith to an object b) object of faith – God's word

- We prove the truth of God's word by trusting it for life choices under pressure of adversity

More valuable – eternal rewards are far more valuable than any earthly wealth or lesser blessing.

Tested by fire – extreme pressure of adversity; allusion to the Judgment Seat of Christ

Found approved – Given approval from God for right motives and right actions

Results: praise, glory, honor – eternal rewards awarded at the JSC.

- A. God loves all of His adopted children with His unlimited divine love.
- B. He loves us enough to not allow us to remain dominated by our old man belief and behavior system so that we are dominated by sin and selfishness.
- C. He loves us enough to push us to grow spiritually, to be transformed by being renewed into the same mind-set as Jesus.
- D. All of the adversities He allows in our life are part of a perfect plan, with perfect timing, with perfect pressure, all as part of His divine training program.
  - Heb 12:5-11 – divine discipline is actually the divine training program of our heavenly Father for His adopted children; produces the peaceful fruit of experiential righteousness as we grow into the belief system of Christ.
- E. When adversity is allowed, He is accomplishing 2 primary goals.
  1. Demonstration that His word is more powerful than anything the devil can bring into the life of a believer – proves the power & validity of His word.
  2. Reveal Old Man beliefs in the believer's heart that need to be taken off to be replaced with New Man beliefs.
- F. The power & validity of His word is proven when we trust it to the end of the adversity and He resolves the problem – faith cycle.
- G. OM beliefs are revealed when we fail to trust Him/word to the end of the adversity and use our old patterns to deal with the problem.
- H. He rewards us for trusting Him to the end (endurance) so that we prove His word.