



Series Title: "Exiles: A Study of the First Letter of Peter"
Message Title: "Rejoice in Suffering"

Date: March 27, 2022
Teaching: Neal McKinney

Reference: 1 Peter 4:12-19

Here are some key points from the passage:

- We are the beloved of God; we are his children by adoption, and we are brothers and sisters bound together in love.
- As exiles in this world, we should not be surprised when we suffer at the hands of those who oppose the Gospel.
- We can rejoice in suffering for Christ. We are blessed when this happens, for it means that God's Spirit and his glory are visible.
- Suffering for our own sin and selfishness is not suffering for Christ, and we are not to act in ways that do not align with the Gospel.
- We do not have to be ashamed when we suffer for Christ. Instead, we can glorify God.
- There is great judgement to come; we must be on gospel mission to tell the truth to our world. As we do, we can look to our faithful Father for our hope.

Message Notes:

As exiles, we live at the tension point of being God's children, yet placed by his will into a culture, a world, that is not our home. How do we live in that reality? How should we carry ourselves? How do we find hope as we suffer for our faith?

Verse 12 starts out with the declaration that we are "beloved." We are the beloved of the Lord. We are loved by one another.

Peter certainly understands suffering for the gospel as he writes this letter. He has followed Christ for decades, and has suffered much at the hands of those who are offended by the gospel. He tells us that we are not to be surprised by the trials that come our way.

Most of us in 21st century America don't really understand suffering. Our "first-world problems" are nothing compared to those of first century Christians... nor to they approach the trials of believers living in oppressive, even dangerous societies. But as we live out the gospel, trials will come to us. It's not "if," but "when."

Trials are refining tools in God's hands. We don't like to think about it, but trials come at the permission of our heavenly Father. They are his way of purifying our hearts, strengthening our faith. Our questions should be "what am I supposed to learn here," or "what is God bringing forth in my life through this?" God is sovereign over our trials and suffering.

Verse 13 tells us that if I am doing God's will, if I am telling the truth of God's word, I can rejoice in the suffering that will come. For as we do, we are actually sharing in the suffering that Christ knew on the cross. Jesus speaks to this in John 15:18-20. If the world rejected Jesus, it will certainly reject his followers.

Many people will be offended by the truth of the gospel. Their responses may be painful for us to receive.

In verses 14 through 16, Peter shows the difference between suffering because of our selfishness and sin and suffering because of the name of Jesus. He shows us that as we try to carry out all that Christ commanded, we are actually blessed—even in the face of persecution and opposition.

Though the world (and some Christians) would have you believe otherwise, the absence of suffering in a Christian's life is not a sign of God's glory. In fact, the opposite is true.

Almighty God, the creator of the universe, is the lover of our souls. He is faithful, and we can entrust our very lives into his hands. Because of this, we can speak God's word even in the face of rejection, oppression and suffering.

- When you feel like giving up and not going on, what keeps you moving?
- What does “suffering” mean to you? Illness? Injury? Financial hardship? Relationship issues
Having a tooth pulled or getting a tetanus shot?
- What is the suffering that Peter addresses in these verses?
- In what way do you think the believer’s suffering part of Christ’s suffering? Why should a Christian find joy in this?
- If someone asked you to describe the Christian life, what are some of the things you would tell them?
- How have you been God’s instrument to bless those who are suffering for the gospel?
- Why does Peter say that we should continue to seek out and follow God’s will (v. 19)?
- Why should we tell others of the gospel of Jesus Christ? Why don’t we?

My Notes and Questions