

Suffering

1 Peter 3:13-4:6

1 Peter 3:13 And who [is] he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good?

While this book has a great deal to say about suffering, even what we might call “persecution”, there was a more oppressive and threatening time coming that would require a solid foundation of truth to enable endurance. This letter was a means of preparing the readers for what they were currently dealing with as well as with what was coming over the horizon.

Common sense would say that we should never suffer for doing good; but, Peter understood the truth that we live in a sin cursed earth that consistently tends toward evil rather than good. It is like a form of entropy, progressive disorder, Christians continue to find themselves in a culture that condemns righteousness and glorifies wickedness.

1. A Proper Response to Suffering

1 Peter 3:14-16 14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, [you are] blessed. “And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.” 15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always [be] ready to [give] a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; 16 having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.

Isaiah 8:12-15 12 Do not say, 'A conspiracy,' Concerning all that this people call a conspiracy, Nor be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled. 13 The LORD of hosts, Him you shall hallow; [Let] Him [be] your fear, And [let] Him [be] your dread. 14 He will be as a sanctuary, But a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense To both the houses of Israel, As a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 15 And many among them shall stumble; They shall fall and be broken, Be snared and taken.

But when you suffer,

- Remember that you are _____! v14
- Do not be afraid but recognize the holiness and _____ of God vv14-15
 - In your _____, (for yourself personally)
- Be prepared with a Godly defense (_____) of your hope (confident trust) v15
[It is worth noting here that Peter is not attempting to convince them to hope, but assumes their confidence in God's sovereign goodness.]
- With meekness and fear (_____ and _____) - actions that reflect Christ v15

Hebrews 6:17-20 17 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed [it] by an oath, 18 that by two immutable things, in which it [is] impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before [us.] 19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the [Presence] behind the veil, 20 where the forerunner has entered for us, [even] Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

- With a good conscience - Practice what you _____! v16

This Hope is Jesus!

___ 1. God causes all things to work together for my good

___ 2. Jesus is always interceding for me

___ 3. Jesus will never leave me or forsake me

___ 4. Jesus is alive! Through Him I have a new birth, a living hope, a heavenly inheritance, and God's powerful protection

___ 5. Jesus will return and take me to place that He has prepared

___ 6. Absolutely nothing can stop God from loving me

___ 7. Through Jesus I have been declared righteous and have peace with and access to God

___ 8. God washes, renews, and justifies me providing the His Spirit and eternal life

A. John 14:1-3

B. Romans 5:1-2

C. Romans 8:28

D. Romans 8:34

E. Romans 8:38-39

F. Titus 3:5-7

G. Hebrews 13:5-6

H. 1 Peter 1:3-5

2. A Perfect Example in Suffering

1 Peter 3:17-18 17 For [it is] better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. 18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,

One commentator noted that Peter “seems to be led on by an instinctive feeling that it is scarcely seemly for the Christian to mention that stupendous event without dwelling on its deeper and more mysterious meaning.

- His suffering paid the _____ for our sins - the Righteous suffered for the unrighteous
- His suffering was substitutionary
- His purpose was to “bring us to God”
 - His body torn that we might have access to the Father (**Heb 6:19-20**)

1 Peter 3:19-20 19 by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, 20 who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while [the] ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.

We have here a confusing and difficult passage that seems randomly placed here without much explanation. But remember our First 3 Keys to Understanding a Passage: context, context, context.

- First we remember that Peter is teaching about suffering because of righteousness
- Next, we know that Peter is teaching about Jesus' example in suffering
- Now we have Noah, his family, and the flood
- And the confusing part—Jesus, in the Spirit, preaching to spirits in prison
 - Did He descend into hell to preach to the souls already there?
 - Did He preach through Noah to these souls before the flood?
- So what else has Peter said in his letter that might shine light on this passage?

1 Peter 1:6-16 *6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, [being] much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see [Him,] yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of [your] souls. 10 Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace [that would come] to you, 11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven--things which angels desire to look into. 13 Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest [your] hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 14 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, [as] in your ignorance; 15 but as He who called you [is] holy, you also be holy in all [your] conduct, 16 because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy.*

While we do not have a guaranteed explanation of the passage, we can be encouraged and edified knowing that Jesus' suffering was for our salvation, but that He is longsuffering in offering us salvation.

- But wait, there's more!

1 Peter 3:21-22 *21 There is also an antitype which now saves us--baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.*

- Baptism now saves
Did Peter really teach that baptism can save you? Does this sound contradictory to what you believe? We have already seen a couple of difficult passages (and this isn't the last) that have stretched our thinking a little so we have hope of comprehending this one.
- Antitype or "Like figure" – a counterpart or representative
Hebrews 9:24 *For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, [which are] copies (antitype) of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;*
- Not the removal of filth—water baptism
- But a good conscience toward God (v16)
 - Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ who provides access
Like baptism, the waters of the flood did not save those eight souls on the ark, but coming through it was an evidence or a witness of their standing before God.
1 Corinthians 10:1-2 *1 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, 2 and were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea;*
- Compare difficult passages to truths clearly taught in Scripture.
Ephesians 2:8-9 *8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; [it is] the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.*
Titus 3:5 *not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,*

We miss out on a clearer, more accurate understanding of God's Word because we fail to read large portions of Scripture and we fail to read them repeatedly.

3. Our Present Obedience in Suffering

1 Peter 4:1-5 1 Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, 2 that he no longer should live the rest of [his] time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. 3 For we [have spent] enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles--when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. 4 In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with [them] in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of [you.] 5 They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

- Arm yourself with the same mind (way of thinking)
Jesus knew His suffering would bring an end to my sin!
 - His death frees from the penalty of sin
 - His death breaks the power of sin
- Avoid the sin that Jesus died for
- Understand that there is a day of judgement

1 Peter 4:6 For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

There seems to have been a question of “why”; why are you willing to suffer if you are just going to die in the end like the rest of us?

- This passage points us again to that hope that awaits us. Yes, believers may die bodily, but they will continue to live eternally because of the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 3:8-12 8 Finally, all [of you be] of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, [be] tenderhearted, [be] courteous; 9 not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. 10 For “He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit. 11 Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it. 12 For the eyes of the LORD [are] on the righteous, And His ears [are open] to their prayers; But the face of the LORD [is] against those who do evil.”

_____ to God. _____ the devil.

James 4:7-8 7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.