

1 PETER CHAPTER 4 – Christ’s Suffering and Ours; Serving for God’s Glory; Suffering for God’s Glory

OBSERVATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: www.ptwente.com Click on “Latest Studies” on the right side. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

INTRODUCTION TO 1 PETER:

Persecution can cause either growth or bitterness in the Christian life. Response determines the result! The Epistle of Peter is the fulfillment of the commission given to Peter by Christ in Lk. 22:31-32. Compare 1 Pet. 1 with Jas. 1:1. Peter was a minister of the circumcision (Gal. 2:9), so he writes to the dispersed Jews (1:1). He is the apostle of hope: 1:3,7,9,12, 3:9-15; 4:13; 5:4. Like Paul, Peter sets forth the doctrines of grace. There are a number of parallels in his letter to the words of the Lord recorded in the Gospels; also there are resemblances between the language of this Epistle and the speeches of Peter in Acts.

First Peter was written from Babylon (5:13). Geographical notations in 1:1 agree with Babylon as the center of writing; however, many understand the name to be a symbol of Rome. The letter is addressed to Hebrew Christians (cp. 4:3 with 1:1), with wider application to all believers in Christ. The purpose of the Epistle is exhortation and testimony. The key thought is the suffering of the Christian. Peter pleads for steadfastness in time of suffering. In the light of the believer’s hope in the resurrected Redeemer. The Epistle is full of exhortations to godly living, and is replete with quotations from and allusions to the OT.

First Peter may be divided as follows:

Introduction, 1:1-2.

Christian Suffering and Conduct in the Light of Complete I Salvation, 1:3-2:8.

II Christian Life in View of the Believer’s Position and the Vicarious Suffering of Christ, 2:9-4:19.

III Christian Service in the Light of the Coming of Christ, 5:1-9.

Conclusion, 5:10-14.

Chapter Four

CONDUCT BEFORE MEN:

CHRIST’S EXAMPLE

Having told us how to have a clear conscience in chapter 3, here in chapter 4, Peter tells us how to think clearly in days of difficulty. The fourth chapter of 1 Peter continues the discussion of the Christian’s relationship to his fellow men. First Peter 3 concluded with the sufferings of Christ, and this subject is carried into chapter 4. The example of Jesus Christ in His suffering should inspire the Christian to strength and purity in his own life. The work of a Christian is twofold—doing the will of God and suffering his pleasure. This chapter directs us in both. The duties we are here exhorted to employ ourselves in are the mortification of sin, living to God, sobriety, prayer, fervent love for one another, hospitality, and the best improvement of our talents, which the apostle presses upon Christians from the consideration of the time they have lost in their sins, and the approaching end of all things (v. 1-11). The directions for sufferings are that we should not be surprised at them, but rejoice in them, only take care not to suffer as evil-doers. He intimates that their trials were near at hand, that their souls were in danger as well as their bodies, and that the best way to preserve their souls is to commit them to God in well-doing.

LIKE CHRIST IN SUFFERING

Peter reemphasizes the main lesson from 3:16–22, which is that Jesus Christ suffered for us in the flesh. We should keep in mind that the Lord Jesus not only suffered for us, He actually died for us. What should be the Christian’s response to the Lord’s action? He ought to equip himself with the same mind that Jesus Christ had toward suffering. Peter mentioned the “purpose” (attitude) of Jesus Christ toward suffering in 2:21–25. The last phrase of 4:1 helps us see what the attitude of the Christian should be in suffering. If we suffer in our flesh as Jesus Christ suffered, we have “ceased from sin,” or perhaps a better translation, we have ceased to do evil.

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***I Know Whom I Have Believed** – (2 Tim. 1:12) Daniel W. Whittle/James McGranahan; sung by Joslin Grove Choral Society*

1 I know not why God's wondrous grace to me he hath made known, nor why, unworthy, Christ in love redeemed me for his own.

Refrain:

But I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I've committed unto him against that day.

2 I know not how this saving faith to me he did impart, nor how believing in his word wrought peace within my heart.

(Refrain)

3 I know not when my Lord may come, at night or noontide fair, nor if I walk the vale with him, or meet him in the air. (Refrain)

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1 PETER CHAPTER 4 – Christ’s Suffering and Ours;

1Pe 4:1 Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm (equip, put on armor) yourselves also with the same mind (thoughtfulness), for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.

1Pe 4:2 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.

1Pe 4:3 For we have spent enough (to suffice) of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.

1Pe 4:4 In regard to these, they think it strange (foreign) that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation (why you don’t party anymore), speaking evil of you.

1Pe 4:5 They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

v. 1 In the last days, Christians should have an attitude of commitment. We need to have a commitment to God that will endure through great struggles. The strongest and best arguments against sin, are taken from the sufferings of Christ. He died to destroy sin; and though He cheerfully submitted to the worst sufferings, yet He never gave way to the least sin. *In the flesh (1 Peter 2:24; 3:18; 4:1) same mind (Phil. 2:5)*

v. 2 When a person has suffered physical persecution for the sake of Jesus, it almost always profoundly changes their outlook regarding sin and the pursuit of the lusts of the flesh. He is more likely to live the rest of his time in the flesh not for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. *(Ps. 90:12; Rom. 8:5-6)*

v. 3 Suffering looses sins grip on us! True conversion makes a marvelous change in the heart and life. a man is truly converted, it is very grievous to him to think how the time past of his life has been spent. It alters the mind, judgment, affections, and conversation. When one sin draws on another. Six sins - 1. They walked in **lewdness**, **ἐν ἀσελγείαις**: insolence, shameless behavior, impurity. 2. In **lusts**, **ἐπιθυμίαις**: strong irregular appetites, and desires of all kinds. 3. In **drunkenness**, **οἶνοφλυγίαις**: wine, and **φλυω**, to be hot, or to boil; to be inflamed with wine; they were in continual debauches. 4. In **revelries**, **κώμοις**: lascivious feastings, with drunken songs, 5. In **drinking parties**: wine feasts, drinking matches, etc. 6. In **abominable idolatries**, **ἀθεμίτοις εἰδωλόλατραις**: that is, the abominations practiced at their idol feasts, where they not only worshipped the idol, but did it with the most impure, obscene, and abominable rites.

v. 4 When the world looks at our godly living, they think it strange that we do not follow them in their flood of dissipation (wastefulness). *Speaking evil of you:* When we don’t participate in the sin around us, we convict those who practice their sin, and they don’t like that - so they speak evil of us.

v. 5 Even if one seems to live the “good life” living by the world’s rules, their life will be a waste in the measure of eternity. The gospel had been preached to those since dead, who by the proud and carnal judgment of wicked men were condemned as evil-doers, some even suffering death. But being quickened to Divine life by the Holy Spirit, they lived to God as His devoted servants. Let not believers care, though the world scorns and reproaches them.

v. 1 How would you describe with what are you armed? Are you willing to suffer for your stand in Christ?

v. 2 Has the bondage to sin really been broken in your life? Are you committed to living the rest of your life for the will of God? Are you making your corrupt nature suffer, by putting to death the body of sin by self-denial and mortification? All sympathy and tenderness for Christ as a sufferer are lost if you do not put away sin

v. 3 Do you truly believe you have spent “enough” of your past doing the will of the Gentiles – that is living in sin? Are you involved in any of the six sins mentioned? Are you praying for any that you know that are involved in these sins?

v. 4 Are you or have you experienced your “old friends” reaction to your present Christian walk? How do you respond their speaking evil of you?

v. 5 How do you let your unsaved friends know that even if one seems to live the “good life” living by the world’s rules, their life will be a waste in the measure of eternity.

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INTERPRETATION

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1Pe 4:6 For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead (to martyrs who have already passed away-or possibly to those now living, but spiritually dead), ***that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.***

Serving for God’s Glory;

1Pe 4:7 But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful (self-controlled, sober minded) ***in your prayers.***

1Pe 4:8 And above all things have fervent (stretched out, extended) ***love for one another, for "LOVE WILL COVER A MULTITUDE OF SINS."***

1Pe 4:9 Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.

1Pe 4:10 As each one has received a gift, minister (serve) it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

1Pe 4:11 If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God (in a reverential manner). ***If anyone ministers (serves), let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.***

v. 6 Suffering places us in good company! Because of this eternal judgment the gospel was preached to the dead. The righteous dead know, and live in constant awareness of, the reality of eternity - and are rewarded by this understanding as they live according to God in the spirit.

v. 7 Suffering keeps us focused on eternity. Near term, the destruction of the Jewish church and nation, foretold by our Savior, was very near. And the speedy approach of death and judgment concerns all, to which these words naturally lead our minds. Presently, our approaching end, is a powerful argument to make us sober in all worldly matters, and earnest in prayer. **We must give ourselves to serious prayer.** As we see the weight of eternity rushing towards us, we dare not take the need for prayer lightly. Luk. 21:34 ; Mt. 26:40, Mt. 26:41

v. 8 There are so many things amiss in all, that unless love covers, excuses, and forgives in others, the mistakes and faults for which every one needs the forbearance of others, Satan will prevail to stir up divisions and discords. But we are not to suppose that love will cover or make amends for the sins of those who exercise it, so as to induce God to forgive them.

v. 9 Love will show itself in hospitality. Christians should often open their homes to others and doing it all without grumbling.

v. 10 The nature of a Christian's work, which is high work and hard work, the goodness of the Master, and the excellence of the reward, all require that our endeavors should be serious and earnest. Love will show itself as we give to the church family what God has given us as gifts. As we do so, we are good stewards of the manifold (many-faceted) grace of God given to us.

v. 11 Suffering frees us to participate in ministry. And in all the duties and services of life, we should aim at the glory of God as our chief end. He is a miserable, unsettled wretch, who cleaves to himself, and forgets God; is only perplexed about his credit, and gain, and base ends, which are often broken, and which, when he attains, both he and they must shortly perish together. But he who has given up himself and his all to God, may say confidently that the Lord is his portion; and nothing but glory through Christ Jesus, is solid and lasting; that abides for ever.

v. 6 Are we clear in our life that its all about the need to please God and not man?

7 Do you believe that Christ could come at anytime? If you do, are you being serious about everyday and be watchful in your prayers? How is your prayer life? Does your prayer life reflect that Christ could come at anytime? How often do you long for heaven? -- A watch unto prayer. Take care that you be continually in a calm sober disposition, fit for prayer; and that you be frequent in prayers, lest this end come upon you unawares,”

v. 8 Would you characterize your love for one another as being fervent, stretched out, extended? As agape love?

v. 9 Are you using hospitality as a tool? Without grumbling? Are you moved by those, such as refugees, have no home or a place to go?

v. 10 Do you have the gift of service, of serving? What gifts have you experienced or are experiencing that you know have been given to you by the Holy Spirit?

v. 11 We are to minister or serve with the ability which God has given. What gifts are you now exercising in your ministry? Speaking gifts or serving gifts?

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Persevering In Suffering for God’s Glory

1Pe 4:12 Beloved, do not think it strange (foreign) concerning the fiery trial (refining fire, purifying, smelting) which is to try (putting to proof, temptation) you, as though some strange thing happened to you;

1Pe 4:13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy (agallio – jump for joy; exceedingly glad).

1Pe 4:14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.

1Pe 4:15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters.

1Pe 4:16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.

1Pe 4:17 For the time has come for judgment (believer’s work evaluated for rewards) to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

v. 12 Instead (stop thinking!) of thinking of trials (even fiery trials) as strange occurrences, we see them as ways to partake of Christ’s sufferings. And if we partake of His sufferings, we will also partake of His glory and joy. The commitment God calls us to have is nothing isn’t greater than the commitment Jesus had in enduring suffering for our salvation. In the last days, we need to have a commitment to God that will endure through great struggles.

v. 13 Suffering allows us to experience glory! We have a tendency is to embrace the glory and the joy, and to avoid any sharing of Jesus’ suffering. Or, we morbidly fixate on the suffering and forget that it is but a necessary prelude to the glory and joy. ***Cf. Lk. 10:21 – one time Christ rejoiced – with exceeding joy!***

v. 14 Suffering for the name of Christ is a blessing, because it shows that we really are following Jesus, and that we suffer because we are identified with Him. We expect the world to blaspheme Jesus. But He should always be glorified among Christians.

v. 15 Suffering as an evildoer is deserved and brings shame to the name of Jesus. Peter recognizes that not all suffering that Christians experience is suffering in the name of Jesus. There is no comfort in sufferings, when we bring them upon ourselves by our own sin and folly.

v. 16 Suffering as a Christian is nothing to be ashamed about, even though the world may despise the suffering Christian. Instead, we should glorify God in these matters.

v. 17 In the context of suffering, we are told that judgment begins at the house of God. God uses suffering as a judgment, in a positive, purifying, not punitive, sense, for Christians, the house of God, now. *If it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?* The sobering application is clear: if this is what God’s children experience, what will become of those who have made themselves His enemies? How can they ever hope to stand before the judgment and wrath of God?

v. 12 When you go through fiery trials, do you think that it’s strange – that you’re the only one who goes through such trials? How quick do you recognize that trials are a natural experience for the believer?

v. 13 To the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, do you ever rejoice in suffering? Do you know what the main purpose of the sufferings is? Do you see how these sufferings **prepare one for the second coming of Christ?**

v. 14 It’s being said here that if you are reproached for the name of Christ, you should rejoice in it. Do you agree with that? Do you see that in your life?

v. 15 If you must be called to suffer, see that it be not for crime. Do you put gossip/meddling with someone else’s business, right up there with being a murderer and a thief?

v. 16 If you were to suffer for something other than for being a Christian, how is one way you could then glorify God in this manner?

v. 17 Note the purifying processes in this verse. Judgment begins at the house of God. God wants to purify His church, thus beginning His work here. But if the judgment begins here, where do you suppose will be the end of the ungodly, of those that do not obey the Gospel?

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1Pe 4:18 Now "IF THE RIGHTEOUS ONE IS SCARCELY SAVED (only by God’s grace!), WHERE WILL THE UNGODLY AND THE SINNER APPEAR?"

1Pe 4:19 Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God (who will never give us more than we can handle) commit (set before or set forth) their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

v.18 It is true that the righteous are scarcely saved; even those who endeavor to walk uprightly in the ways of God. This does not mean that the purpose and performance of God are uncertain, but only the great difficulties and hard encounters in the way; that they go through so many temptations and tribulations, many fightings without and fears within. Yet all outward difficulties would be as nothing, were it not for lusts and corruptions within. These are the worst sin issues and troubles. And if the way of the righteous be so hard, then how hard shall be the end of the ungodly sinner, who walks in sin with delight, and thinks the righteous is a fool for all his pains!

v. 19 Finally, suffering reminds us to faithfully commit our soul unto our Creator. This is the conclusion then, that seeing the state and condition of the saints in this world, at worst, and which is but for a time, is infinitely preferable to the dreadful state and condition of disobedient persons, ungodly men, and sinners, and which will endure to all eternity; they should not think strange of their sufferings, or complain of them, but patiently endure them; and especially when they consider that these are not the effects of chance, or merely owing to the malice and wickedness of men, or to any second cause only; but they are the will of God, are by His appointment, under His direction, and by His order, and for their good, and His own glory. Therefore it becomes them to *commit the keeping of their souls to him, in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator*: and which is not only their duty, but their privilege: and the sense is, that when they are called to suffer for Christ, they should commit their cause to God.

Cf. 2 Cor. 11:22-12:1; 12:7-10 – The apostle Paul’s sufferings!

We cannot read these verses without admiring the courage and devotion of the Apostle Paul. Each trial left its mark on his life, and yet he kept moving on, serving the Lord. “*But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself*” (Act_20:24).

Paul certainly proved his love for the church.

May we never take for granted the sacrifices that others have made so that we might enjoy the blessings of the Gospel today.

v.18 We see here the comparison of the saved and unsaved as it relates to salvation. If I, as a believer am scarcely saved, how about an unsaved person?

v. 19 1 Peter 4:19

Summarizing the previous verses, we are told here that suffering as believers in this world is infinitely preferable to the dreadful state and condition of unbelievers. Are you thanking the Lord for His grace and praying for the lost with fervency and conviction?

May we be those who slowly but surely:

- **Learn to embrace suffering.**
- **May we begin to understand that it truly loosens sin’s grip on us personally,**
- **Causes others to see us differently,**
- **Places us in good company,**
- **Keeps us focused on eternity,**
- **Frees us to participate in ministry,**
- **Allows us to experience glory, and**
- **Reminds us to commit our souls unto our Creator faithfully.**