

BLESSED ARE THE PERSECUTED (Lesson 6 - Peter)

The Fiery Trial and How to Endure It

(Learning to Shine, not Whine!)

1. EXPECT SUFFERING

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. 1 Peter 4: 12

Two inescapable realities every Christian must face:

- I live in a fallen world.
For the creation was subjected to futility.... Romans 8: 20
- I live in a world that crucified my Lord.
If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. John 15: 20

2. EXULT IN SUFFERING

- Suffering is God's **REFINING FIRE** to test my faith & purify my life.
...the fiery ordeal...which comes upon you for your testing... 1 Peter 4: 12
- Suffering draws me **CLOSER TO CHRIST**.
...but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; 1 Peter 4: 13a
- Suffering in this life produces **GLORY IN THE NEXT**.
...so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation. 1 Peter 4: 13b
- Suffering means Jesus is being **SEEN IN MY LIFE**.
If you are reviled for the name of Christ... 1 Peter 4: 14a
- Suffering takes me deeper into the ministry of the **HOLY SPIRIT**.
...you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory & God rests upon you. 1 Peter 4: 14b

3. EVALUATE SUFFERING (Ask three questions)

- Why am suffering?

By no means let any of you suffer as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; 1 Peter 4: 15

Three Kinds of Suffering:

1. COMMON suffering because I live in a fallen world.
2. CARNAL suffering because I sin.
3. CHRISTIAN suffering because I follow Christ.

- Am I ashamed or glorifying Christ?

...but if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not feel ashamed, but in that name let him glorify God. 1 Peter 4: 16

- Am I seeking to win the lost?

And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and sinner? 1 Peter 4: 18

There is no comparison between the FIERY TRIAL Christians suffer now and the FIERY HELL the unrighteous suffer later.

4. ENTRUST SUFFERING TO GOD

Therefore, let those also who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right. 1 Peter 4: 19

What mental relief and repose it engenders, to know that back of human suffering and back of the vast universe in which our planet is an almost unperceivable speck, there is a Faithful Creator! This prodigious universe can be frightening if we view it apart from some such guarantee as that; but when we are assured that its infinite Architect is the "faithful Creator," then the frightening becomes friendly. Every dark cloud has a silver lining, and every thunderstorm has a rainbow arching it. Every mystery holds a hidden benediction, and every permitted teardrop glistens with a gracious new meaning. A streak of powerful light strikes even across the monster problem of sin, suffering, and death, so that we sense a divine fidelity even beneath that. J. Sidlow Baxter