

I Peter Sermon SUFFERING FOR DOING GOOD

I Peter 3:8-22, 4:12-19

We continue our series out of First Peter
And today we look at Suffering

A little boy asked his Mom, “What’s the highest number you have ever counted to?” She didn’t know, but then she asked him “what’s your highest number?” He said it was 5372. “Oh” she asked, “why did you stop there?” He answered, “Church was over.”

I don’t know if children suffer during church,
But I do know that Christians are suffering in the world.

More than 43 million Christians have been killed for
their faith since the crucifixion of Jesus.

More Christians have been martyred in the 20th Century
than in all the prior 1,900 years combined.

Churches bombed, Christian’s imprisoned in Indonesia, China, North Korea,
Iran, throughout the Middle East.

Open Doors” an international Christian missionary organization classified
North Korea as the leading country for oppressing Christianity for the 4th
time consecutively since 2003.

Today, Christians are the most persecuted group in the world.

Persecution is on the rise because of Communism,
the expansion of Islamic and Hindu extremism,
and because of the anti-Christ spirit that is prevalent throughout the world.
Suffering plagues our world.

In its many forms it affects us physically, psychologically and emotionally.
Whatever its manifestation, extended suffering can crush the body and spirit.
It afflicts innocent victims.

That was happening in Peter’s day and he was addressing
The suffering of his people.

First he said:

I. DON’T BE SURPRISED IN YOUR SUFFERING

1 Peter 4: 12 ‘Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.’

Greek word for FIERY TRIALS means (poo’-ro-sis) smelting, burning, trial.

Peter exhorts us not to be surprised as if something strange was happening to us

Remember what Jesus said:

"Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. 22All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. 23When you are persecuted in one place flee to another. I tell you the truth, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes. Matthew 10:21-23

We are to remain faithful in our suffering.

Faithful to God in every circumstance.

Peter says suffering is a litmus test for the Christians.

If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. John 15:18

Another definition of Fiery Trial is – Ignition

Down on Cape Canaveral, when the shuttle is about to be launched.

A button is pushed and the announcer says:

“We have Ignition.”

The engines fire.

“We have takeoff.”

James speaks of suffering as a kind of ignition test to us.

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. JAMES 1:2-4

Suffering ignites patience

Patience is the key to everything.

We get a chicken by hatching the egg, not by smashing it.

Our trials ignite our spirit to deeper faith

And faith develops perseverance,
and perseverance ignites us to grow
to be mature and complete
Not lacking anything.

Peter pushes us a little deeper in his thoughts on suffering.

Actually he pushes some of us over the edge.

He asks us to rejoice in the suffering.

II. REJOICE IN YOUR SUFFERING

Read 1 Peter 4: 13 'But rejoice that you are sharing in Christ's sufferings that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.'

GOD HAS A PURPOSE IN SUFFERING

The early church would never have fled Jerusalem and Judea to go into the other parts of the world had they not been pushed and persecuted. The book of Acts tells their story.

We learn the reality that **"no discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it"** (Hebrews 12:11, NIV).

God still uses every painful experience we have to his glory.

When the man born blind was before Jesus,
His disciples wanted to drag Jesus in to a complicated discussion about sin and suffering.
But Jesus simply states that there is a higher purpose in suffering.
Which we can't always see.

Jesus said: .

**"This blind man did not sin nor did his parents. But he was allowed to be born blind so that the works of God could be displayed in his life."
(John 9:3,4)**

Take a man and Cripple him, and you have a Sir Walter Scott.

Lock him in a prison cell, and you have a **John Bunyan**.

Bury him in the snows of Valley Forge, and you have a **George Washington**.

Raise him in abject poverty and you have an **Abraham Lincoln**.

Strike him down with infantile paralysis, and he becomes **Franklin Roosevelt**.

Burn him so severely that the doctors say he'll never walk again,

and you have a **Glenn Cunningham** – who set the world's one-mile record in 1934.

Deafen him and you have a **Ludwig van Beethoven**.

Have him or her born black in a society filled with racial discrimination, and you have a **Booker T. Washington, a Marian Anderson, a George Washington Carver**

Call him a slow learner, and write him off as uneducable, and you have an **Albert Einstein**.

Most of the Epistles were written from prison.
 Most of the greatest thoughts of the greatest thinkers
 of all time had to pass through the fire.

God can use suffering just like he can use our gifts, our talents.
 And he is worthy of our trust.

28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28

Someone has said “suffering is only intolerable when nobody cares” (Dr. Brand 257).
 The most difficult thing about suffering is to do it all alone.
 We feel that nobody cares,
 Nobody knows.

SLIDE JESUS IN GARDEN

--Jesus most intense suffering came on the cross
 when he felt God had left him and turn his face away from him
 because he had taken your sins and mine upon himself,
 And in that moment he was eternally alone.

But God had a purpose for his suffering.

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. Isaiah 53:5

The best single thing I can do to prepare for pain and suffering,
 is to surround myself with a loving community
 who will stand beside me when tragedy strikes”

That why the family of God is so important.

There is healing in small groups and support groups.

That where we are loved and heard and cared for.

Don't isolate yourself from others in your suffering.

Come to the Sunday school class, grief, pain, divorce, or cancer groups.

And be careful how you care for one another.

A mother was too busy to visit her elderly neighbor who was ill, so she sent her son: She said “Run over and see how old Mrs. Smith is doing.
 The boy came running back and reported. Mrs. Smith said its none of your business how old she is.

**God has a purpose in your suffering.
He can turn the beast into a blessing.**

III. ACCEPT SUFFERING AS A BLESSING

God's Response and the end result of our suffering is his blessing..

1 Peter 4: 14 'If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.'

That is what Stephen found in the midst of his stoning.
Heavens opened and the **the Spirit of Glory and God upon you.**

Especially when we suffer for the sake of Christ.

Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. Luke 6:22-23a

There is a blessing in suffering.

Did you hear about the woman whose husband died.

He had left a will providing \$30,000 for an elaborate funeral.
At the funeral, Lynn his widow, said to her closest friend Sue.
"Well, I think Bill would have been pleased."

Sue replied "I'm sure you're right," but in a whisper ask.

"How much did this really cost?"

Lynn said: "All of it, all thirty thousand."

Sue exclaimed. "Really, I mean, it was very nice, but \$30,000?"

Lynne replied, "Yes. The funeral was \$6,500; I donated \$500 to the church, and the wake, food and drinks were another \$500. The rest went for the Memorial Stone." Sue said: "\$22,500 for a Memorial Stone? My goodness, how big is it?" Lynn said: "Two and a half carats."

There is a blessing in suffering.

THERE IS A WARNING HERE FOR US AS WELL

IV. RECOGNIZE SINFUL CHOICES IN YOUR SUFFERING GOD TAKES YOUR SIN SERIOUSLY

"For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not

obey the gospel of God? And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner?" I Peter 4:17-18

Sin and rebellion changed a world-like paradise of Eden, into a world of evil and suffering.

Jesus said that in this world there would be tribulation and suffering. Sinful consequences strikes rich and poor, religious and irreligious, small and great. In this life virtually everyone will experience it. at some time or other.

The conclusion should be obvious. Much of OUR suffering is caused by wrong choices. We must not make the same mistake of Adam and Eve Disobedience to God's word bring consequences. Peter wants to make sure were not blaming God when It is sin that is involved.

We have violated the laws of the spirit, the physical, The laws of relationship, And then wonder why?

Don't let me hear of your suffering for murdering or stealing or making trouble or being a busybody and prying into others people's affairs. I Peter 4:15

That will bring you shame.

Vs 16 But it is no shame to suffer for being a Christian. I Peter 4:16

Take the man who was drunk and decided to break into a convenience store. He was trying to pry open the front door with a crowbar when he noticed people inside were watching him. The store was still open.

Peter is saying "your sins will find you out."

I like the story of the man who was in an accident for reckless driving. He was trying to sue for his hurt shoulder. His attorney said: "Show us the damage to your shoulder by how high you can lift your arm." He winced as

he raise it slowly. Then the Judge said: "Well show us how high could you lift it before the accident." He lifted it way up.

God will judge His house first,
and then he will turn his eyes to the unbeliever
to visit His judgment upon them.

As a Christian you must acknowledge that sin is evil
and that God can have nothing to do with it
If God is going to judge the Christians,
how much more will the judgment of the unbeliever be?
Much greater....and unto damnation.

5. TRUST IN THE SAVIOR IN SUFFERING

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

God knows what he is doing with the world and with your life.
Though you may have times of great difficulty and you may not understand
what is happening, you must still trust God
Endure the trials and tribulations by exercising faith in Jesus.
By trusting Him, depending on Him.
It strengthens your walk with God.
It builds character
It brings glory to God.

A Sunday School teacher decided to have her young class memorize one of the most quoted passages in the Bible... Psalm 23. She gave the youngsters a month to learn the verse. Little Bobby was excited about the task, but he just couldn't remember the Psalm. After much practice, he could barely get past the first line. On the day that the kids were scheduled to recite Psalm 23 in front of the congregation, Bobby was so nervous. When it was his turn, he stepped up to the microphone and said proudly, "The Lord is my shepherd... and that's all I need to know!"

If your in pain this morning –that is all you need to know.
If your marriages is breaking—that is all you need to know
If you sin has broken your heart—Trust the savior—that's all you need to know. Invite Jesus the Good Shepherd into your heart.
That is the message God has for each of us in our suffering.
The Lord is my shepherd...and that's all I need to know.