

**Text: 1 Pt 4.17-19**

Tonight, we will conclude 1 Pt 4. The big theme since ch. 3.13 is suffering, especially as individual believers. The suffering in view is the suffering of persecution, but we could also apply some of these teachings to suffering because of God's providential allowance:

- Suffering illness
- Suffering injury from accidents
- Suffering in a major disaster

Our text tonight is a little curious, it raises some questions. Let's have a look...

**Read 1 Pt 4.12-19, text 17-19**

Last week we talked about "not being ashamed" in suffering for Christ, or "suffering as a Christian." Those who persecute mean it for evil ... "You're one of those born-again!" they sneer. I respond, "Yes. Yes, I am."

How can I take that kind of suffering that way? Because I am trusting God. Our text today urges us to

*Keep on Trusting*

**Proposition:** When it comes to our own suffering, if we should suffer as Christians, we should endure, and keep on for the Lord.

**I. The elementary troubles of this time (17a)****A. Judgement as a process**

1. We hear the word judgement, and we think: "conviction, verdict, penalty"
2. Here, what we have in view is a process — something that begins and has a process and a purpose

**B. The topic at hand is the suffering particularly due to Christians because they are Christians**

1. I said that we could apply the lessons to other forms of undeserved suffering
2. Lost people also experience illness, injury, disasters
3. Only Christians suffer as Christians

C. Why can we suffer as Christians and not be ashamed?

1. Because now is the time for suffering as Christians
2. Now is the time “for judgement to begin with the household of God”

D. What does suffering as a Christian prove?

1. It proves (or tests) your Christianity
2. Can you endure? Or do you fade?

Consider:

Mal 3.2-3 ¶ “But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap.<sup>3</sup> “He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the LORD offerings in righteousness.

Mt 3.11-12 ¶ “As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.<sup>12</sup> “His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

“It is right that where there is a high calling and an honored name there should be a life proving the accuracy of these two things. So, when God begins to test that which professes to be gold and silver, who can say that He does not begin His testing at the right place, and with the right material?”<sup>1</sup>

**But note:** I call these “elementary” troubles

## II. The destructive troubles of the time to come

A. The searching judgement that proves faith destroys disobedience

1. Here judgement is applied to “those who do not obey the gospel

<sup>1</sup> Spurgeon, *1 Peter*, 1 Pt 4.17.

2. When they are tested in the process, what does it prove? That they are none of his

Think of the smelter: it refines the ore — the true gold remains, the dross, the impurities, are cast away and destroyed.

Think of the threshing floor: the wheat is retained, the chaff is burned.

## B. What will the outcome be for those who do not obey?

1. In v. 18, Peter quotes Pr 11.31 in the LXX to make his point

Pr 11.31 If the righteous will be rewarded in the earth, How much more the wicked and the sinner!

DCSJ\_LXX: On the one hand if the righteous is with difficulty saved, how shall the ungodly and sinner appear.

- a. The first quote there represents the Heb, in the NAU version
  - b. The second quote is my own (DCSJ version) of the LXX
2. Peter is not making an argument from the OT proverb, he is using the proverb to make his own point

“The meaning of the proverb must be discerned from the context in which Peter used it...”<sup>2</sup>

3. Peter’s logic:
  - a. The Christian who suffers as a Christian undergoes testing that proves his faith (like a winnowing process)
  - b. The disobedient, the ungodly, the sinner, who goes through the same process – when they endure the difficulty – what then?
  - c. Spurgeon’s version:

“If the wheat is winnowed, what is to become of the chaff?”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 228.

<sup>3</sup> Spurgeon, *1 Peter*, 1 Pt 4.17.

- C. The comparison is for us to put our own difficulties in perspective
1. Peter doesn't expound on the destiny or troubles of the sinner
  2. Peter reminds us that we will endure the judgement, but the sinner will not

### III. The consequential commands for the believer (19)

- A. If we suffer as Christians, we suffer "according to the will of God"

"Suffering according to God's will in this context is suffering on account of one's devotion to Christ rather than for one's crimes or stupidity (4:15–16)."<sup>4</sup>

- B. Therefore:

1. Entrust your soul to your faithful Creator
  - a. The word has these ideas:
    - 1) "to entrust for safekeeping, give over, entrust, commend"<sup>5</sup>
    - 2) "παρατίθεσθαι, παραθήκη were used in classical Greek of anything deposited with a friend for safe-keeping."<sup>6</sup>
    - 3) DCSJ: "put it in the bank"
  - b. This isn't just Stoic "endurance"
2. We have a personal relationship with our Creator
  - a. We trust our Father
  - b. We trust our Saviour

"Compare a commonly prayed ancient Jewish prayer: 'We give thanks unto Thee.... For our lives which are committed into Thy hand, and for our souls which are in Thy care.'"<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Keener, *1 Peter*, 350.

<sup>5</sup> Bauer, *BDAG*.

<sup>6</sup> Selwyn, *1 Peter*, 227.

<sup>7</sup> Keener, *1 Peter*, 351.

### 3. This trust is just like that of Jesus

Lk 23.46 And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT." Having said this, He breathed His last.

Ps 31.5 Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have ransomed me, O LORD, God of truth.

We shouldn't seek suffering! But we should trust when we suffer. Put ourselves into the hands of our Lord.

### C. And one more: we should keep on doing what is right

"Furthermore we should keep on doing what is right (e.g., submitting to government rulers, obeying masters, submitting to husbands, loving wives, etc.) rather than doing evil (v. 15)."<sup>8</sup>

### Conclusion:

**Proposition:** When it comes to our own suffering, if we should suffer as Christians, we should endure, and keep on for the Lord.

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<sup>8</sup> Constable, *Expository Notes*, 1 Pt 4.19.