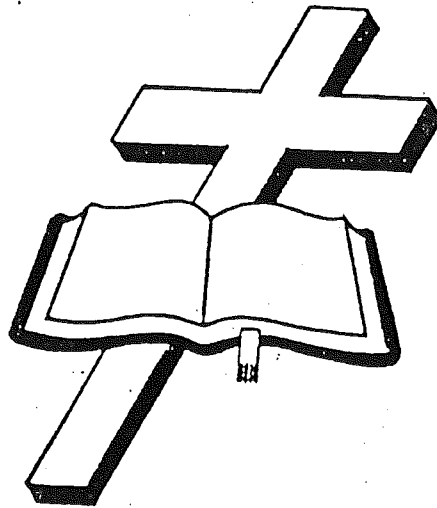


SUFFERING WITH POWER

(How God Gives Grace In Extreme Situations)
I Peter 4:12-19



To Conquer Suffering:

- ◆ Reject Condemnation
- ◆ Remember Jesus
- ◆ Receive Impartation
- ◆ Rejoice Gratefully
- ◆ Resist Anxiety

*“If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of
Glory and of God resteth upon you” (I Peter 4:14)*

Bill Kirk

“SUFFERING WITH POWER”

Text: I Peter 4:12-19

Subject: How God Gives Great Grace In Extreme Situations

Introduction

- ◆ In chapter 1 – **Suffering with Joy**
- ◆ In chapter 2 – **Suffering with Patience**
- ◆ In chapter 3 – **Suffering with Forgiveness**
- ◆ In chapter 4 – **Suffering with Power**

(Notice verse 14), “If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you”.

Question: What does it mean to be reproached for the name of Jesus?

Question: What enables you to be happy (or rejoice) in times of great pain?

Question: And, what does it mean for the Spirit of glory and of God to rest upon you?

(Remember The Context Of I Peter)

1. Peter is writing to believers who are suffering.
2. On July 19, A.D. 64, the city of Rome was consumed in a holocaust of fire.
3. For three days and nights, Emperor Nero watched from the Tower of Maecenas.
4. Nero started the fire so he could build his own new city.
5. The Roman people were devastated and lost everything.
6. Their resentment was great towards Nero.
7. So, Nero chose the Christians as his scapegoat.
8. Nero diverted attention away from himself and publicly blamed the believers for burning Rome.
9. For the next 200 years, Christians were falsely charged and tortured.
10. It was painful to stand tall for Jesus (and refuse to declare “Caesar is Lord”).

Question: What happened to believers who were not ashamed of Jesus? (Under Nero and his successors)

- #1. Believers were being dragged from their families.
- #2. Many were dipped in tar and used as living torches to light the gardens of Nero.
- #3. Many were sewn inside wild animal skins for hunting dogs to devour.
- #4. Many were nailed to crosses.
- #5. Many had boiling lead poured over their naked bodies.
- #6. Many had fiery red branding irons put to all parts of their bodies.
- #7. Many had their arms and legs torn apart from their bodies one by one by machines and animals.

(Like Peter Says In I Peter 4:12)

“Fiery Trial” was literally fiery trial!

(The Question To Us Is:)

- ◆ How do you handle mistreatment?
- ◆ How do you hold up under trial?
- ◆ How do you overcome evil with good?
- ◆ How do you deal with suffering and neglect, and betrayal and isolation, and slander and persecution of any kind?

Question: How many of you want to respond God’s way when pain touches your life?

Question: How many of you don’t want to backslide under trial?

Question: How many of you want to be faithful under pressure?

Question: How many of you want to rise above every attempt of evil to depress you?

Question: How many of you want God’s strength to be made perfect in your weaknesses?

“Suffering With Power”

or

(How To Experience God’s Power When You Need It The Most)

Question: How do you conquer suffering God’s way?

(Suffering Secrets)

#1. Reject Condemnation (V. 12)

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you”.

Question: Why not be surprised or shocked when you suffer in some way?

Answer: Because we are in a fallen world (and the enemy wants to use your pain to condemn you).

- ◆ Suffering can tempt you to doubt God’s love.
- ◆ Suffering can tempt you to doubt God’s integrity.
- ◆ Suffering can tempt you to condemn yourself.

Question: But what does the Lord say?

Answer: “Think it not strange”.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ Pain comes with the territory of godly living.
- ◆ Trial comes with the territory of an imperfect world (full of sinful people).
- ◆ Hostility comes with spirituality.

(“Think It Not Strange” Means:)

- ◆ Don’t think that what happens to you is something which doesn’t happen to others as well.
- ◆ Don’t be shocked when life is difficult.
- ◆ Don’t be surprised that being saved doesn’t grant you immunity from life’s challenges.
- ◆ Reject the false gospel that promises only healthy, wealthy and happy days.

Question: Then pastor, why be saved and live a righteous life?

Answer: Because there are only 2 choices.

#1. Suffer here for a while as a Christian (or)

#2. Suffer in hell forever as a non-Christian.

(So Reject All Condemnation)

- ◆ Suffering doesn’t mean you’re a lousy Christian.
- ◆ Suffering doesn’t mean something is wrong with you.
- ◆ Suffering doesn’t mean you’re a bad person or a poor example, or don’t have faith, or that you have sin in your life, or are out of God’s will.

#1. Reject Condemnation

#2. Remember Jesus (V. 13)

“But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that when His Glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy”.

Question: What makes it possible to rejoice when you suffer?

Answer: Because whenever you suffer for doing what is right, (you are sharing in the sufferings of Jesus) (Repeat)

(Notice verse 13), “But rejoice (how can you?) inasmuch you are partakers of Christ’s sufferings”.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ You are associated with Jesus in the deepest devotion possible.
- ◆ You are remembering what Jesus went through.

- ◆ You can rejoice in the fact that you've been privileged to take up your cross.

Illustration

- ◆ When Polycarp (the Bishop of Smyrna) was arrested and brought to the arena, the proconsul ordered him to offer incense to Caesar.
- ◆ The proconsul commanded "Take the oath, curse Christ, and I shall release you".
- ◆ Polycarp replied with these words, "Eighty-six years I have served Jesus, and He never did me wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?"
- ◆ With those words Polycarp was burned at the stake as he prayed peacefully to the Lord.

Question: How could he bare it?

Answer: He remembered Jesus and knew that he was partaking of Christ's sufferings!

#3. Receive Impartation (V. 14)

"If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of Glory and of God resteth upon you; on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified".

Question: How can we as believers be happy in times like these?

Answer: (V. 14), "For the Spirit of Glory and of God resteth upon you".

Fact: The word "Reproached" means: Ridiculed or insulted.

Question: How many of you have ever been insulted for your testimony?

Question: How many of you have ever been ridiculed?

Question: How many of you have ever been criticized because you took a stand for the Name of Jesus?

Question: How many of you have ever been made light of at a family reunion, a Christmas dinner, a party at work, a farewell celebration or an employee gathering?

Question: What enables you to not sink (but swim above the current of rejection)?

Answer: (V. 14), "For the Spirit of Glory and of God resteth upon you".

- ◆ "Glory" refers to the Shekinah (or presence of God that filled the House of the Lord) (I Kings 8:11)
- ◆ "Resteth" is a word that means "Closeness and refreshment".

"For the Spirit of Glory and of God resteth upon you" (Means:)

- #1. Whenever you are reproached for your testimony and are insulted (and suffer) the Holy Spirit will rest – or refresh you and strengthen you.
- #2. The word "Rest" describes refreshment in the sense of taking over for you as a dominant power in the midst of your pain.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ Divine impartation of the Spirit enables you to be strong (and not cave in).
- ◆ Divine impartation infuses you with a deep and intense consciousness of God's presence.
- ◆ Divine impartation anoints you and enables you to stand firm and not fall under pressure.

#4. Rejoice Gratefully (V. 16)

"Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf".

Question: What does it mean to "Glorify God" when you suffer?

Answer: It means: To praise God for the opportunity to share in the sufferings of Jesus.

Question: How can you praise God when you share suffering (like Jesus did)?

- #1. You know that suffering measures how strong your faith is. (Remember:)
 - ◆ Our faith is measured by how much we are willing to sacrifice for it.
- #2. You know that suffering reveals your trust in God.

- ◆ Suffering proves your trust and your faith (in those very seasons).
- #3. You know that suffering strengthens your patience and endurance.
 - ◆ The more you are tried and tested, the more you are able to endure.
- #4. You know that suffering (the right way) will attract others to Jesus.
 - ◆ Other people will see the strength of Jesus in you (and be drawn to the Lord).

(Verse 16), “Yet if anyone suffer as a Christian, let them:

#1. Not be ashamed (and) #2. Glorify God.

#1. You’re not embarrassed to stand for the Lord

- ◆ His Name is more important than your name.

#2. “You glorify God” (Which means:)

- ◆ You are grateful for the privilege to stand for righteousness.
- ◆ You rejoice that Jesus allows you to follow in His steps.
- ◆ You take on joy (not anger or resentment) that you are allowed to bear the cross of Christ.

#5. Resist Anxiety (V. 19)

“Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God (do what?)

Commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing as unto a faithful Creator”.

Question: What is God saying here?

Answer: That, instead of worry and fret and living anxious, “Commit yourself” to a faithful God.

Question: What does it mean to “Commit yourself”?

Answer: The word “Commit” (PARATITHESTHOSAN) means “To deposit or entrust”.

(It Means:)

#1. You can entrust your life to the Lord for safekeeping.

#2. You can entrust the Lord to deliver you from (or deliver you in) whatever pain suffering causes you.

Question: Why can you trust and not worry?

Answer: Verse 19, Because God is your “Faithful Creator”.

Question: What does it mean to be “Faithful”?

Answer: It means the Lord will be faithful to His promises to you.

(The Word “Creator” Means:)

- ◆ If the Lord has power to oversee nature and His creation...

- ◆ ...He will certainly oversee those who belong to Him. (That’s you and me).

Question: How can you suffer with power?

#1. **Reject Condemnation** (Don’t allow sins power to put you down as a believer, a mother, a father, an employer, employee or a worker in the church).

#2. **Remember Jesus** (and consider it a joy to partake of things that He went through).

#3. **Receive Impartation** (allowing the Spirit of God to rest upon you – or infuse you with strength from above).

#4. **Rejoice Gratefully** (Thank God for the privilege to honor the Name of Jesus).

#5. **Resist Anxiety** (By committing yourself to your Faithful Creator – who keeps His promises to you).

(Altar Call)

AMEN!

Bill Kirk, Pastor