

# Living for God

## WHY SUFFERING?

1Pe 4:1-11  
Nov 25, 2018

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1 Since therefore **Christ suffered** in the flesh, **arm yourselves with the same way of thinking**, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has **ceased from sin**, 2 so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for **the will of God**.

3 For the **time that is past** suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, **living in sensuality**, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. 4 With respect to this they are **surprised when you do not join them** in the same flood of debauchery, and they **malign** you; 5 but they will **give account to him** who is ready to judge the living and the dead. 6 For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does.

7 ***The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled*** and sober-minded for the sake of your **prayers**. 8 Above all, keep **loving one another earnestly**, since love covers a multitude of sins. 9 Show **hospitality** to one another without grumbling. 10 As each has received a **gift**, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied **grace**: 11 whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever **serves**, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything ***God may be glorified through Jesus Christ***. To him belong glory and ***dominion forever and ever. Amen***.

## Why Suffering?...

### (context)

BECAUSE JESUS CAME ON A SEARCH AND RESCUE MISSION

1 Peter 1:18-20

18 knowing that you were *ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers*, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. 20 He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was *made manifest in the last times for the sake of you*

1 Peter 3:18

18 *For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God*, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,

Jesus was on a Search and Rescue mission and **it required Him to Suffer on a Cross** for our redemption.

### **He had to suffer to find and rescue us from sin:**

- Rescued from God's Just wrath against our sins
- His redemption **doesn't just secure "fire insurance" but leave us broken in our sins. It is a deliverance from sin (sanctification).**
- Now, believers, He has Commissioned us to share with others what He accomplished on the Cross.

### **Now this is passed to us: GC**

**The Church is on a Search and Rescue mission and the enemy won't roll over. We can't be engaged in rescuing people from the devil without some serious **pushback**.** Christ told His disciples while with them that the world hated Jesus and would therefore hate them. Suffering has clearly here a GC context. Peter was soon to find out as an old man (Jesus predicted this to Peter). Crucified upside down.

Witness still involves suffering. Sometimes suffering is thrust upon us without any pre-awareness. Sometimes it is of our own choosing in identifying with Jesus. **This is the story of the church always...we've had it easy in the USA...The Lord has introduced me to such people and they changed my outlook to this day:**

**Kefa** - rifles, suddenly only Jesus...he said "When you face death, suddenly it is only you and Jesus"...need to ask yourself this: what you are going to do...would you be willing to die for it? Kefa had a perspective on life that I have never attained. But it grew out of looking down the barrel of rifles to get that understanding. Few of us will have that experience, but all of us can live like this is our last day.

**Pastor Wilson:** Arrested by Idi Amin's general. Dungeon...transferred to court yard and stripped naked outside for 2 wks. That general was almost killed in car wreck...flew to England for surgery...wife died...released Wilson. "I went right back and planted 3 churches under their noses."

In his book One Hundred Prison Meditations Richard **Wurmbrand**, who spent 14 years in prison as a Romanian pastor, (Sarah and I sat down and talked with him at the Garden Tomb after he preached...years later he wrote these words,

**"I have accepted this proposal. Christians are meant to have the same vocation as their King, that of cross-bearers.** It is this conscience of a high calling and of partnership with Jesus which brings gladness in tribulations, which makes Christians enter prisons for their faith with the joy of a bridegroom entering the bridal room.<sup>1</sup> "

**Suffering comes in many forms, but it has the same intended effect when we acknowledge God's Hand in it: Sanctification. It breaks the old to make way for the new.** We still live in a sinful and broken world and that is where God has kept us until Jesus returns. But He isn't cruel, He isn't finished with our transformation into the likeness of Christ.

## **BECAUSE THROUGH SUFFERING WE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME LIKE JESUS (4:1-6)(Sanctification)**

<sup>1</sup> **Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves (AorM IPTV) with the same way of thinking,** for whoever has suffered in the flesh has **ceased from sin,** <sup>2</sup> so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for **the will of God.**

### **THE REASON FOR LIVING AND THINKING DIFFERENTLY: CHRIST SUFFERED FOR A PURPOSE (4:1)**

- Not automatic! = Decisive (Aor), M = DO THIS FOR YOURSELF, IPTV
- Our Model - Think like Jesus: He didn't do this just to give fire insurance, to only rescue us from fire of Hell. Oh, He does that. But so much more. He is out to prepare us for Himself, His presence, His character transformation of us.

- When Jesus suffered on the cross, He was completely done with sin's realm. He never could sin, though tempted. We have sinned. Our nature is not perfect as His was. But when He died, sin and suffering can never touch Him again. What happened to Him, is what is now yours positionally.

**ESVSB:**

**More likely, Peter's point is that when believers are willing to suffer, the nerve center of sin is severed in their lives.** Although believers will never be totally free from sin in this life (cf. James 3:2; 1 John 1:8), when believers endure suffering for the sake of Christ they show that their purpose in life is not to live for their own pleasures but according to the will of God and for his glory.

**John Piper:**

**...I believe what this means is that if you trust God enough to suffer for doing what is right (as 3:17 says), then you have made a decisive break with sin.**

**In other words, choose suffering because if you don't, you will choose sin. But if you do, you will prove that your bondage to sin has been broken. Get the thought and the purpose in your head that Christ is worth suffering for; live out that conviction when the choice comes between suffering and sin; and in suffering sin will be defeated and you will be triumphant. If you come to the point where you suffer for righteousness' sake, you have ceased from sin—not perfection, but a clean break with the past of sin.**

The break with sin is described in 1 Peter 4:2 "so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God."

## **BECAUSE THROUGH SUFFERING WE CAN EMBRACE THE WILL OF GOD INSTEAD OF OUR OWN AGENDA**

4:1b-2...for whoever has suffered in the flesh has **ceased from sin**, 2 so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for **the will of God**.

**Not just referring to persecution for being a Christian, talking about attitude to any suffering:**

**Paul Tripp** engaged in GC work for years: Sarah and I spent time with them over the years and have admired Paul's ministry. Something changed for him at the top of his game...my Friend recently wrote a book about his own recent suffering...intensely grapples with it's purpose...Paul Tripp:

Physical condition that overwhelmed...

I wanted to get back to my routine and my project-oriented lifestyle. Little did I know of the multiple surgeries, hospital stays, and months of convalescing that would become my life for a long time. Little did I know that I would never again be physically the same. I was in the throes of something I had no power to control, and other than doing what the doctors told me to do, there was nothing I could do about it.

### **Suffering Clarifies Who Is in Control**

**Hardship has the power to burst the bubble of our self-sovereignty.** I don't think I'm alone in saying that **I'm tempted to give myself comfort by convincing myself that I have more control over people, places, and things than I actually have.** We want to believe that if we eat the right things and do the right exercises, we can control our health. We buy into thinking that if we parent our children well, we can guarantee that they will turn out all right. We want to believe that if we budget well, invest wisely, and save carefully, we can assure a good financial future. We want to think that if we dedicate ourselves to a loving marriage, we can secure its health and permanence. **These are all good things to do, but the assumption that doing them controls outcomes is just not true.** From the very first breath of Adam, the Bible confronts our delusions of and desire for control....

(Paul Tripp)

**Suffering and God's Absolute control are intertwined. His purpose of creating man was not to make an independent creature who would wave goodbye and go on about life in this new world. Man was made as an image bearer and since image speaks of reflection of an Original, then God wasn't after our independence but rather our Dependence upon Him.** (look where that attempt at independence got us!)....try living with a 2 yr old without establishing any perimeters in the house [better have good fire insurance]... Great benefits of depending upon God brings great joy.

No...since the garden there hasn't been anything perfectly right about anything. We live in a broken world. Christ came and suffered to set things right. Peter knew this after reflecting on Christ's suffering and with that picture in mind, he draws a direct line to the believer, you and me.

Sojourners...chosen...great dignity of God's people makes you a royal priesthood, in Christ, the dignity of restored Image Bearers is the result of our union with Christ. You are made to be different than a broken human race. Culture seeks identity in all the wrong places. In Christ, having been redeemed, true dignity

and freedom is found. How strange that our world seeks “liberation”, freedom from God as people attempt to be autonomous, only to be left used, broken, hurting. Christ restores us to full humanity. Isn't oppressive. Is truly liberating.

Since therefore Christ' suffering draws a direct line from Him to us in the matter of hardships. For us, the impermanence of this life is to etched on how we think and live. To live as though today's condition will continue in this life is not how you should think. Breaking with sin isn't just ceasing doing bad behaviors, it is thinking differently as a believe that results in different values and priorities. It is a guard against bitterness when the Father brings difficulty front and center to you and me.

### **MOVE ALONG...NOTHING TO SEE HERE...JUST MOVE ALONG...**

3 For the **time that is past *suffices*** for doing what the Gentiles want to do, **living in sensuality**, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. 4 With respect to this they are **surprised when you do not join them** in the same flood of debauchery, and they **malign** you; 5 but they will **give account to him** who is ready to judge the living and the dead. 6 For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does.

V. 3 - An era, age, disappearance of past time is gone (Pf). New ethics arrived because of Christ. Immorality isn't progressive and forward looking, it is the reverse. It involves a throwback to a past that will not endure and doesn't continue. It is outdated, old fashioned, useless. Future (eternity) has already arrived.

- **γὰρ ὁ παρεληλυθὼς χρόνος = Verb, Perfect, Active, Participle, Nominative, Masculine, Singular**
- παρέρχομαι to pass beside, pass along, pass by, to pass, elapse, as time, to pass away, be removed, met. to pass away, disappear, vanish, perish, to become vain, be rendered void, trans. to pass by, disregard, neglect...

### ***Stop playing your past sins in the Theatre of your Mind!***

No matter how little or how much you sinned in the past, that is enough! Don't think, “Well, I need sin some more, don't want to miss out on what everyone else is into! That is enough. Don't need, so don't want it. Bury behind you the sins of your past. Don't relive them in you memory, move forward because of the Coming of Christ as King.

**Micah 7:19 He will again have compassion on us;  
he will tread our iniquities underfoot.  
You will cast all our sins  
into the depths of the sea.**

**Corrie Ten Boom:** “I think God has put a no fishing sign on the beach.”

## **Don't envy the Living Dead...Resist Giving in to Compromise or Intimidation or Cowardice - Long term understanding...**

1 Peter 4:4 With respect to this **they are surprised** when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; **5 but they will give account (FAI3PL) to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.**

**GIVE AN ACCOUNT = ἀποδίδωμι** to give in answer to a claim or expectation; to render a due; to recompense, to discharge an obligation, to pay a debt, to render back, requite, to give back, restore, to refund, reimburse; repay; reward; sell.

I believe that a boat load of suffering is coming our way in America. Politics are a window into the should of a nation...indeed political groups are fundamentally religious in nature because the value embraced are truly religion externalized. Unless history fails to repeat itself here, we are on the verge of religious suffering and the church needs to wake up, not out of fear or anger, but out of awareness that we should think the way Jesus did because that is how we will change our world! You and I are not on a playground in this world but we are on a battle ground for the sake of the Kingdom of Christ.

## **BECAUSE IN SUFFERING WE REALIZE ALL OF LIFE IS NOW ESCHATOLOGICAL**

**1 Peter 1:20** He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you... [20 προεγνωσμένου μὲν **πρὸ** καταβολῆς

κόσμου, φανερωθέντος δὲ ἐπ' **ἐσχάτου** τῶν χρόνων δι' ὑμᾶς]

- **χρόνος** chronos 54x time, whether in respect of duration or a *definite point of its lapse, an epoch, era, marked duration.*
- = **causal, to indicate a reason on account of, because of, for the sake of**

1Pe 4:7 ***The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded*** for the sake of your **prayers**. 8 Above all, keep **loving one another earnestly,**

since love covers a multitude of sins. 9 Show **hospitality** to one another without grumbling. 10 As each has received a **gift**, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied **grace**: 11 whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever **serves**, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything ***God may be glorified through Jesus Christ***. To him belong glory and ***dominion forever and ever. Amen.***

## HERE IS EXACTLY WHAT PETER HAD IN MIND WHEN HE WROTE THESE

**WORDS...**Spent 3 yrs hearing Jesus say the same thing over and over in many different ways...

Matthew 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Matthew 12:28 But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Vince Lombardi after Green Bay Packers lost to a lesser team: He Called the team back to basics...”gentlemen, this is a football!”

***“The end of all things is at hand, therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers...”***

***We are called to...***

## A Life of Integrity

- In your right mind, sane, sensible and reasonable intellectual expression, self-control (want to see the opposite of this, look at political rhetoric, educational attitudes, media)
- Sober: opposite of intoxication; free from every form of mental excess and confusion, clear-headed. > look at the loss of healthy public discourse!

***WHEN CHRIST ARRIVED...THE KINGDOM OF GOD ARRIVED: WHY? BECAUSE THE KING HIMSELF WAS HERE. WHERE THE KING HAPPENS TO BE IS WHERE THE KINGDOM EXISTS.***

- Knowing that God has determined to bring a certain outcome, Peter says that is an incentive to pray all the more.
  - Some believers think that God’s plan means there is no further reason to pray. Never! Predestination doesn’t destroy prayer, it stimulates it. It creates it. Fuels it. Motivates it.
  - Prayer isn’t meant to change God or His plan, it is to God because He alone can make a difference and bring something to pass. And what do we want Him to bring to pass? His Will!!!! His will is always the best. Anything less would be like drinking sand.
    - If God is sovereign, why pray?
    - If God is not sovereign why pray?

- If God is sovereign, why not pray?
- This leads to self-control. Opposite of “out of control.” You aren’t called to a life of impulsiveness. Living intentionally in the light of knowing God’s will and His determination to bring it to pass! Self-control is the fruit of the work of the Holy Spirit.
- Sober minded is opposite of being drunk. Clear head, know where you need to go. Peter says that leads directly to your prayers!!!
- Prayer is first in the order of response (pray harder because you know that God has a good and singular plan and He is going to do what He has determined. Prayer is divinely appointed as the means of accomplishing His plan. Someone gets saved? It is because God wanted to save them, but he did that by setting His people to praying. Sovereignty and Prayer are always working together!!!
- Problem with thinking that the only thing that matters is the Second Coming of Jesus. Oh, we long for that!!! But if that is all you live for, missing the present by only looking for the future. Eschatology isn’t just about the Second coming of Christ. It is about His First as well.
- Something changed and everything changed...an old era ceased and a new one began.
- this change means that the believer can no longer live as if he were still in the old period or era.
- Printing press changed reading habits
- Atomic Bomb: changed warfare
- TV changed means of communication
- Jesus changed everything at the Cross!

## Healthy Church Relationships (v.8)

- Orthodoxy of Love ἀγάπην ἐκτενῆ ἔχοντες (volitional love extended that you are holding onto with passion)

## Serve Through the Gift You have Recieved

1. Grace χάρισμα
2. Speaking τις λαλεῖ
3. Serving διακονοῦντες

### WHEN THE CHURCH IS THE CHURCH: GOD IS MADE LARGE IN PEOPLE’S EYES

LIVING TO GLORIFY GOD (sailors in ancient time navigated by the North Star...) glorifying God is life’s North Star.