

I Peter: Lesson #81 – Suffering As a Christian
Notes for Parents to Study With Their Children
For Wednesday, Mar. 11th

Read I Pet. 3:13-22; 4:12-19; 5:9-10 (a simplified explanation of the text will be supplied at the end of these notes).

Memory Verse: I Pet. 4:16 “Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.”

When Being Mistreated Because of Serving Jesus Can Be a Blessing

- Most of the time, when you do good things and right things, people treat you right. You won't make most people angry because you are doing good.
- But some people in this world don't like good things. They don't like God, they don't like Jesus, they don't like church and they don't want to have to live right. When you do what is right, they actually hate you for it. It's sad that they are that way. Not everyone is like that, but some people are.
- Some people may act mean to us just because we follow the Lord and go to church. They might talk bad about us or say mean things. Now when they do that we might think we better quit doing good things so they will be nice to us. But do you really want to quit pleasing God? We need to love God and remember He is more important than these other people. We should have a fear of God. We should fear Him more than we fear anyone else.
- If someone mistreats us for doing what God wants us to do, we should always feel blessed. Remember that they mistreated Jesus when He tried to do good.

Sanctify Christ as Lord in Your Heart

- Sanctify means that you know that something or someone is special to God. Jesus should be sanctified in our hearts. We know that God thinks Jesus is special. He is our Lord, our Savior, our King, our High Priest. Give Jesus an important place in your heart. Make Him the most important thing of all in your life.
- Other people may wonder why we serve Jesus Christ and why we don't live just exactly like everyone else. As you learn more and more about God's Word, you should always be ready to tell people why you live for Jesus. When you tell them, you should say it nicely and gently, not mean or hard.

If You Must Suffer, Suffer for Good Things

- No one really wants to be treated badly. Sometimes people are treated bad because they do bad things. If you steal money, the police will put you in jail. If you hit someone, they may hit you back. If you disobey your parents, you will probably get punished. You may suffer, but not for a very good reason. You just suffered because you did bad things.
- If you have to suffer, it would be better to suffer because you did good things. If we suffer because we are truly trying to live the life of a Christian, then that will glorify

God. It is an honor to be a Christian, even if we have to go through hard things to be Christians.

- The devil hates Jesus and he is against everyone who serves Jesus. He can use people to make trouble for Christians. We must stand up against the devil by staying faithful to Jesus even when it is hard.

Be Thankful That We Can Be Saved

- Noah lived in a very sinful world. They probably made fun of him for building the Ark. They probably said he was silly to listen to God all those years when the Ark was being built. But one day the flood came and drowned all those sinful people. Inside the safety of the Ark, Noah and his family were protected. The water had saved Noah from the sinful people He was living around.
- Peter reminds us that we also have been saved by water. When we are believe and are baptized, we will be saved. Baptism saves us, not because we get wet and wash dirt off of our bodies, but because it is the way we obey God so that He will cleanse us from our sins.
- We should be very thankful that God made a way for us to be saved, just like He made a way for Noah to be saved.

What if We Don't Become Christians?

- In Peter's time the gospel was starting to be preached in a lot of places. People were having the chance to become Christians. Even once you became a Christian, you had to be serious about it. As we've been talking about, even if people mistreated you for being a Christian, you still had to stay faithful. Some people who were baptized, didn't stay faithful to Jesus. These would be judged by God.
- If God would judge people who had been baptized and become Christians, what would it be like for people who didn't care anything about God? What if they totally ignored the gospel and never even acted interested in it? What if they refused to listen to Jesus? Clearly, people like that will be severely judged for not obeying God.

Simplified Explanation of the Text

We Shouldn't Be Afraid to Serve the Lord

3:13 If you are trying to zealously follow the good and helpful things the Lord commands, then who would mistreat you for doing that?

14-15 But even if you do suffer because of righteousness, then consider yourself blessed. As God told Isaiah, "You are not to fear what they fear or be in dread of it. It is the LORD of hosts whom you should sanctify. And He shall be your fear, And He shall be your dread." (Isa. 8:12,13)

So don't be afraid of their fear or be upset by it. But "sanctify" Christ as Lord (set Him apart as Lord) in your hearts. Always be ready anytime some one asks you to explain your hope. Be prepared to speak up and defend that hope, but have a gentle, controlled, humble attitude that is respectful.

16 Hold on to a good conscience so that if they are saying things against you, as if you had done wicked things, your good conduct will make them ashamed for having treated you so badly.

17 If it is God's will that you suffer, then it's far better for you to suffer for doing good than for doing wrong.

18 For Christ also once had to suffer in regard to sin, but in His case it was a matter of the Righteous suffering for the unrighteous so that He could bring us to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.

Noah's Salvation and Our Salvation

19-20 We are not the first to have to defend the truth in a time where sinful people oppose it. In spirit Christ went and preached to the spirits now being kept under guard who at one time back in Noah's day would not be persuaded to obey. Back then God showed a willingness to hold His anger back while the Ark was being prepared. In that Ark eight souls were saved by water.

21 That resembles your situation: baptism now saves us, not by putting off dirty flesh, but by the request to God of a good conscience because of the resurrection of Christ.

22 Christ has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God. Angels, as well as other authorities and powers have been put under His authority.

Glorify God By Being a Christian

4:12 Beloved, don't think it's strange that this burning fire has come to try you, as though this was something strange coming to meet you.

13 But be glad that it has come, in that it allows you to share Christ's suffering. When His glory is revealed, you can be glad that you stood with Him with great joy.

14 If you are insulted and slandered in the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory and of God rests on you. They are blaspheming, but you are giving glory.

15 None of you should suffer as murderers, thieves, evildoers, or as those who've meddled in other people's business.

16 But if you suffer as a Christian, don't be ashamed, but glorify God in this name.

What Will Happen to Those Who Won't Obey God?

17 A time of judgment has begun and it starts with the house of God. If God's own household is the first to be judged, how will it end up for those who refuse to be persuaded by the Gospel of God?

18 And if it takes a difficult struggle for the righteous man to be saved, where are those who have no interest in God and are devoted to sin going to be seen?

19 So then, those of you who are suffering according to God's will should put your souls into His hands, trusting Him as a faithful Creator to do the right thing for you.

Keep Standing Up Against the Devil

5:9 Continue to stand against the devil staying unmovable in your faith. You know that your brethren in the world are faithfully enduring those same experiences of suffering all the way to the end.

10 But, having suffered a little, the God of all grace that called you by Christ Jesus into His eternal glory, will Himself mend you, stabilize you, strengthen you, set you on a secure foundation.