

22S02 1st Peter 4:12-19 Suffering as a Christian

Hello everyone. Thank you for joining me today @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. I hope everyone is doing well. Today we are continuing our series on 1st Peter with 1st Peter 4:12-19.

The author of this letter is the Apostle Peter. Most scholars believe this letter was written sometime in AD60-64. The main theme of 1st Peter is “Where does our Hope come from?” for those suffering persecution. This letter was written to Christians living in the Roman Empire and facing persecution because they follow Jesus.

I’m reading from the International Children’s Bible (ICB) again today, I like the plain English in this translation. But of course, you can use whatever translation you choose.

Before we start today, Peter is talking about some things we often don’t want to talk about. Suffering. Suffering as a Christian. In our modern culture we are often told we should not suffer. Especially for Christians, we are told God is love. God wants the best for us. God does not want us to suffer. And yes, these are at least partial truths. The problem is we don’t get to define what is best for us. God does. God knows what is best for us and we don’t. God loves us, this is true. He loves us so much, but this does not mean rescue from all of life’s trouble. Quite the contrary, God promises to use our troubles and suffering for good. He does not promise rescue, let’s be clear. And I don’t believe God wishes for us to suffer, but in this world, there is suffering, and we will suffer. Everyone suffers in this world; it is more about how we respond to the suffering that sets us apart for God. The world is watching, so how do we respond.

Let’s read 1st Peter 4:12-19 (ICB) *¹²My friends, do not be surprised at the painful things you are now suffering. These things are testing your faith. So do not think that something strange is happening to you. ¹³But you should be happy that you are sharing in Christ’s sufferings. You will be happy and full of joy when Christ comes again in glory. ¹⁴When people insult you because you follow Christ, then you are blessed. You are blessed because the glorious Spirit, the Spirit of God, is with you. ¹⁵Do not suffer for murder, theft, or any other crime, nor because you trouble other people. ¹⁶But if you suffer because you are a Christian, then do not be ashamed. You should praise God because you wear that name. ¹⁷It is time for judgment to begin, and it will begin with God’s family. If that judging begins with us, what will happen to those people who do not obey the Good News of God?*

¹⁸“It is very hard for a good person to be saved. Then the wicked person and the sinner will surely be lost!” (Proverbs 11:31)

¹⁹So then those who suffer as God wants them to should trust their souls to him. God is the One who made them, and they can trust him. So they should continue to do what is right.

Let's pray. Dear heavenly father, guide our discussion today such that your message is clear to each of us. As we read your word from 1st Peter, help us to feel the encouragement you intended us to feel. I pray that you help me stay out of the way so your hope and peace can be shared with us. I pray this in your name Lord Jesus. Amen.

Okay, let's look closer at what Peter is telling us. First 1st Peter 4:12 (ICB) ***12 My friends, do not be surprised at the painful things you are now suffering. These things are testing your faith. So do not think that something strange is happening to you.***

Okay. Did you hear this. Don't be surprised when we suffer. I don't think any of us want to hear this. But Peter is telling us "don't be surprised". It is going to happen. So get prepared. Peter wants us to be mindful that it's going to happen, so we are not caught off guard. We won't be surprised. As Peter says, "do not think that something strange is happening to you." When we face troubles in this life, it is an opportunity for us to grow our faith in God. This concept of "testing" is not so we will fail but so we will grow stronger in our relationship with God.

In fact, Peter goes on to say in, 1st Peter 4:13 (ICB) ***13 But you should be happy that you are sharing in Christ's sufferings. You will be happy and full of joy when Christ comes again in glory.*** You heard it right. Peter is telling us to happy and full of joy at our suffering. Christ suffered for us, so when we suffer because we are a Christian, we are sharing in Christ's suffering. God does not wish us to suffer but He wishes us to grow in our relationship with Him. How we deal with our trials and troubles is what matters most. Do we trust and rely on Jesus or something else.?

Let's read the next verse again, 1st Peter 4:14-15 (ICB) ***14 When people insult you because you follow Christ, then you are blessed. You are blessed because the glorious Spirit, the Spirit of God, is with you. 15 Do not suffer for murder, theft, or any other crime, nor because you trouble other people.***

This is a little tricky. When people hurt us or insult us because we are following Jesus, then we are blessed. Probably does not seem like the kind of blessing we should want but think about it a little more. If Jesus is our most important relationship, then it is a blessing to stand by Him. Standing strong in the face of insults and persecution is proof that the Spirit of God is in us. Peter clarifies something here. If you suffer because you did something wrong, then we deserve to suffer the consequences.

Let's read verse again, 1st Peter 4:16-17 (ICB) ***16 But if you suffer because you are a Christian, then do not be ashamed. You should praise God because you wear that name. 17 It is time for judgment to begin, and it will begin with God's family. If that judging begins with us, what will happen to those people who do not obey the Good News of God?***

Peter again reminds us that everyone faces the Judgement of God. How we behave matters. Don't think because you claim to be Christian that you are not accountable for

your actions. God forgives us if we repent but there are still consequences for our actions. How much worse is it for those who deny God's Good news. They face ultimate judgement for their sins without God's forgiveness.

Let's read verse again, 1st Peter 4:18-19 (ICB) ¹⁸ *"It is very hard for a good person to be saved. Then the wicked person and the sinner will surely be lost!"* (Proverbs 11:31)

¹⁹ *So then those who suffer as God wants them to should trust their souls to him. God is the One who made them, and they can trust him. So they should continue to do what is right.*

Peter ends this section with a quote from Proverbs. We know that we can never be good enough to earn Salvation. Only through the grace of God can we be saved. Peter tells us to trust God. Have faith in His promises. God made us, so we can trust Him. Do what is right in the sight of God and don't worry about what the world thinks of you or what the world does to you. Do what is right.

Let's Review,

- 1) **Why does Peter say don't be surprised when we suffer?** First of all, everyone faces times of suffering. Christian and non-Christian alike. But Peter is telling us don't be surprised. Be prepared. Also, remember Jesus suffered for us, so would we think we won't face suffering for Him as well. Prepare yourself and Trust Jesus.
- 2) **Is it a blessing to suffer because you are Christian?** Well yes. No one wants to suffer. But if you love Jesus and He is the most important relationship we have then it is a blessing to defend the one we love. When we face suffering for Jesus and stand strong, we have proof God's Spirit is in us. That is a blessing.
- 3) **Why does Peter say don't be ashamed?** The word translated as ashamed in Greek is *aischunó* (ahee-skhoo'-nom-ahee) it means to not be ashamed or do not disgrace or dishonor. It is this idea that we should not feel bad that we suffer, in fact Peter tells us that our suffering glories God. I don't know about you but honoring God sounds a lot more important than honoring some human or idea. I choose God.

Let me leave you with this today. Peter wants us to understand that as Christians we will face suffering. People are going to hate us because we are different as followers of Jesus. It's okay. Stay focused on Jesus. If we do what is right in God's eyes, we don't need to care what other people think or do.

Let's Pray.

Heavenly Father thank you. Thank you for giving us the strength to face the trials of this world. We can trust your promise that those that hurt us will be judged. We can trust your promise that you are with us. Help us to feel your blessings

even in those tough times. Even when we are hurt and insulted because we follow you Jesus. I trust you Lord. I pray this in your Name Lord Jesus. Amen

I hope you are enjoying our study of 1st Peter. I hope you will join me for the rest of this series

Thank you for joining me @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. If you liked the message, please select like. And Please Subscribe to our channel. Leave comments here, or our website or mail me at kip@punla.org. I appreciate your feedback. Until next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.