

Suffering - What's it Good For?

The Resurrected Life - Part 4 1 Peter 1:6-8 & 3:13-18
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1. Suffering is inevitable.

Suffering is part of the consequences of living in a broken world. Even Jesus, the PERFECT person, experienced suffering! Knowing this to be true and trusting that there is a purpose for suffering helps us cope with suffering's inevitability.

2. The potential good from suffering.

According to Peter, our faith (trust in God) is more valuable than any earthly substance! Suffering is a tool God can use to refine our faith and test its genuineness. Our faithfulness (trust) honors God, and gives us peace under pressure.

3. Persevering through seasons of suffering.

- A. Knowing it's not a random event, God intended it for good!
- B. There is nothing wrong with crying, especially out to God. The scriptures are full of examples (Ex. 2:23; Neh. 4:4; Ps 22:1-2). However, Christians KNOW that God has a good purpose in suffering and a secure future for us, so we are not crushed in seasons of suffering & can have genuine joy through them.
- C. Keep your eyes on Jesus! Scot Mcknight writes, the example of Jesus becomes a source of encouragement for those who are facing suffering. Just as Jesus suffered as a righteous man and was vindicated by the Father, so too will we be vindicated because of our faith in Jesus!!

"A goldsmith would put the gold into the smelting furnace long enough to remove the cheap impurities; then he would pour it out and make from it a beautiful article of value. It's been said that the eastern Goldsmith kept the metal in the furnace until he could see his face reflected in it. So our Lord keeps us in the furnace of suffering until we reflect the glory and beauty of Jesus Christ" -*Be Hopeful*, by W. Wiersbe. pg.35

4. The opportunity it will present.

Peter *assumes* that people will notice the remarkable way that following Jesus changes the way we live and some will ask you about it! *So be prepared*, "to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have".

1 Peter 3:15 "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect"



Community Group Questions:

- 1. What do you think? How did this message challenge, change, or affirm your thinking?
- 2. We covered a few of the examples of why Christians were persecuted by the Jews and Romans. What are some examples of how you or Christians in America suffer persecution? How about Christians in other countries?
- 3. How do you define having a, "clear conscience" (1 Peter 3:16) How do you keep one? What advice would you have for others to have one?
- 4. What can you put into practice from what you've learned today?

Notes:
