

Sufferings and Persecutions

In this teaching, I will be detailing what the Word of God has to say about persecution. Unlike what some believers believe, we are not immune to persecution. There are sufferings and persecutions that come with seeking the Lord and serving Him.

Philippians 3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

These sufferings are not poverty, diseases and sicknesses and a they do not originate from the Lord. This will be in reference to the persecution for the Gospel's sake. Jesus suffered persecutions not poverty, sicknesses, and diseases which further reveals that persecutions will come but to steal the Word (Mark 4:17) and get us off track with pursuing the Lord and seeking after Him.

1 Peter 2:11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

- a) Peter like Paul both used the words beloved and beseeched. This was an appeal to these folks.
- b) He ties his exhortation to the fact that we are strangers and pilgrims.
- c) Strangers live like they are out tomorrow. Pilgrims do not have a permanent place but are on their way out. They are just passing through.
 - i) Because we are pilgrims and strangers, we are encouraged to abstain from fleshly lusts.
- d) What is to abstain and how do we do that?

- i) One of the ways we do that is by renewing our soul/minds through the Word of God hence adopting a pilgrim mindset.
- e) The Greek word for “Soul” is “Psuche”
- i) Our soul is the combination of our mind, will, and emotions. It is what most people refer to as the personality.
- f) Notice that these lusts war against the soul. There is a war going on against our soul and body. Our Spirit man has been born again and that war has been won already however our soul (mind, will, and emotions) is up for grabs as well as our body. The battlefield is in between our two ears—mind.
- g) If we do not abstain from these fleshly lusts, we are giving the enemy his best shot at us.

1 Peter 2:12 Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

- a) We are to have our conduct and behavior honest—that is truthful according to the Word and godly especially among the Gentiles. Why? because we are light. We need to shine brighter in the darkest places. One of the ways we do that is not by what we say, but rather by what we do.
- b) The word “conversation” is referring to our lifestyle, conduct or behavior. We can talk with words, but we can also talk with our actions—godly actions.
- c) As we live a godly life outside, those that speak evil of us will have to change their tune because our conduct is godly, and we are blameless. Our godliness will attract people to us, and the Lord and we can minister salvation to them.
- d) Notice that the Gentiles (unbelievers) behold our good works, not just our bad works. It may look like they never see anything good we do but that is not true. They know what is good and they looking to find it in us.

- e) These good works are not referring to the things that people do to earn right standing with God. Those would be dead works. This is rather speaking of the works of faith. Works that are a by-product of our faith and relationship with God.
 - i) Our good works (godly conduct and behavior) cause others to glorify (magnify and thank) God. The opposite is true as well which further underscores the need to have godly conduct.
 - ii) As people see our godly conduct, they will be drawn to the God in us.
- f) Visitation is referring to the return of the Lord what many refer to as the rapture of the church.

1 Peter 2:18 Servants, *be* subject to *your* masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

- a) At this time of writing this, this was speaking primarily to a slave. Slaves were supposed to arrange themselves under their master. A lack of submission even while under slavery would be wrong.
 - i) “Servants” is similar to what we refer to as employees.
- b) As employees, we are to be subject or submit to our masters (employers).
 - i) We need to be respectful of them. We can disagree with our employers, but it is not acceptable to disrespect him or her. Before we begin to disrespect our employers, we need to resign.
 - ii) It is unethical to sit there and collect a paycheck from someone you despise and disrespect. The godly thing would be to step down and out.
- c) There are two types of masters or employers. The believing masters and the unbelieving masters.

- i) In many cases, the believing masters are a lot easier to submit to but when it comes to the unbelieving bosses, many of us tend to rebel and refuse to submit ourselves to them.
- ii) This verse is telling us that we need to be consistent in our submission to our masters. We should be submissive to the **good and gentle** ones as well as the **harsh and bad** ones.
- iii) If we do so, we will be a godly witness to them which could in return influence them in getting saved. We saw in verse 12 that our good works may cause others to glorify God.
- d) Again, this is speaking of submission, rather than obedience.
- e) Submission is simply where is my place? Most people have little to no difficulty submitting at work, teams, and military but when it comes to doing the same at home, it is a huge problem. We should be consistent at home as we do at work.

1 Peter 2:19 For this *is* thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

- a) There is a place or time where for conscience towards God we will suffer unfairly. The good news is that we will have the grace to do so.
- b) Why would we suffer wrongfully if we were doing everything we are told by authority and leadership? The reason we suffer wrongfully is because we have disobeyed an ungodly command.
- c) This is showing that although we are to submit ourselves to our masters, bosses, and employers, we are not to obey everything they tell us to do specifically those things that violate the Word of God.

1 Peter 2:20 For what glory *is it*, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer *for it*, ye take it patiently, this *is* acceptable with God.

- a) This is saying that if we are suffering for our sins, disobedience, and rebellion, it is displeasing to God. There is no reward or praise if we suffer or are punished for our own behavior.
- b) Rather, the only pleasing and acceptable suffering before God that has reward is when we are treated unjustly or punished for doing that which is right and godly—honoring and choosing to fear the Lord over man.
- c) When this happens, we are reminded to take it patiently knowing that it is pleasing and acceptable to God.
- d) 2 Timothy 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.
 - i) This also clearly shows that there will be a time where we will suffer for doing the right thing. Gone are the thoughts that we won't suffer any pain if we do all things right.

1 Peter 2:21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

- a) Suffering should not be looked at as something strange especially when we suffer for that which is right, godly, and according to God's will.
- b) Jesus left an example for us in that if we suffer for doing well, we should take it patiently because it is acceptable to the Lord.

1 Peter 3:14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

- a) There is suffering in this life (2 Timothy 3:12). Hebrews 11:24-27. We suffer for what we have done, what others have done, have not done, and what we have not done.

- b) Unlike what some have said continually, this suffering is not a sickness, misery, disease or poverty. This is suffering in relation to persecution for godliness.
- c) Suffering for righteousness' sake is persecution. When this happens, we should rather rejoice. We have become partakers in the suffering of Christ.
- d) This verse uses the word "if" not "when", it is possible for someone not to suffer for righteousness sake and rather suffer for another sake.
- e) We should also not be afraid or threatened by others for doing right.

1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

- a) The word "sanctify" is referring "to set apart." The Lord should be set apart in our hearts.
- b) One of the ways we do that is by being ready to give an answer to everyman that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.
- c) People ask because they see a difference in us such as our conversation and fruit. There is something they see we have that they want, or they are missing out on. Things such as a relationship with the Lord, peace, joy, contentment and so forth.
 - i) When they ask us, we should always be ready to tell them about the Lord Jesus who is the hope in us (Colossians 1:27) and the very reason for whatever we are and have. In this regard, we should always be ready.
 - ii) I do not believe this talking about being ready to preach a sermon.

1 Peter 3:16 Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

- a) We should strive to have a good conscience.

- i) Our conscience can be trained to a place where it excuses us and accuses us when we do something good or wrong.
- b) Notice that evil will be spoken of you even when you have a good conscience and do the right thing. It is ignorance to think because we are doing right everyone will speak positively about us.
 - i) People will take the good we do and speak of it as evil.
- c) One thing is also true. Those who accuse our good behavior will be ashamed for falsely accusing us. Our fruit cannot be forever argued against.

1 Peter 3:17 For *it is* better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

- a) It's is better to suffer if it be God's will. This suffering is in relation to persecution for godliness.
 - i) Any other kind of suffering like sickness, disease or poverty has never been and will never be God's will.
 - ii) When we suffer persecution, it should be for godliness and well-doing, not evil doing.
- b) Suffering for our own ungodliness and stupidity is not persecution.
- c) This verse also makes it clear that there will be suffering or persecution for well-doing or godliness. We should not think it strange when this happens (1 Peter 4:12).

1Pe 3:18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

- a) This verse starts by giving us an example of suffering for well doings mentioned in the previous verse.

- i) Jesus suffered for doing well and good. He did no evil.
- b) Jesus suffered for our sins once. He did not have any. Jesus was sinless (Isaiah 53:9; Hebrews 7:26; John 8:46; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22; and 1 John 3:5).
- c) He is not dying again, why? Because it is finished and done. Nothing new or more is required. The death of Jesus was to bring us to God.
- d) Jesus did not faint. He was put to death in His physical body. If Jesus did not die, He couldn't be quickened (made alive). You can't quicken something or someone that is not dead—needing to be made alive.
- e) After Jesus died for our sins, now we through faith could transition from the unjust to the just, from stained sinners to saints.
- f) Jesus is the only way to bring us to God. There is no other way (John 14:6).
- g) We should also not be afraid or threatened by others for doing right.

1 Peter 4:12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

- a) It is not strange to experience suffering. This suffering is referring to persecution.
 - i) 2 Timothy 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.
 - ii) We have been redeemed from sin, poverty, sickness, and disease—not Persecution which is a result of living a godly life and following after Jesus.
- b) Paul uses the word “Beloved”. In other words, he is saying we need to “be loved” especially when going through suffering for righteousness sake. We are loved by God regardless of what we go through. We need to always remember we are loved even when all hell breaks

loose.

1 Peter 4:13 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.

a) Rejoice! When we are experiencing any kind of difficulty, suffering, and hardship, we need to rejoice with exceeding joy. Why? Because we are partakers of Christ's suffering. It's an honor to be partakers of the sufferings of our Lord, God, and Savior. This is one reason why we should rejoice.

i) *Acts 5:40-41 And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. [41] And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.*

b) The other reason is that His glory will be revealed, and we shall be glad. Things will not remain the same very long.

1 Peter 4:14 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.

a) It's an honor to be reproached for the name of Christ. We should not shy away from it. The Spirit of the Lord is doubly with us when we experience any reproach for Christ's sake. For that reason, we ought to rejoice.

b) Although some are speaking evil of the Spirit of God, to us He is being glorified.

c) It may not look like so but in the spiritual realm, God is being gloried. This can be seen in one way. The church grows rapidly when it is being persecuted and reproached. Believers begin to fully trust in the Lord putting everything on the line.

1 Peter 4:15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

- a) We can suffer for good or for evil doing. There is suffering or persecution that happens for godliness and one that happens for living ungodly and in sin. We should be rejoicing in the former rather than the latter.
- b) We should not suffer for doing wrong. That is not God's will for us and doesn't glorify God.

1 Peter 4:16 Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

- a) It is not shameful to suffer for righteousness sake. This kind of suffering we should take with joy.
- b) How do we glorify God?
 - i) One of the ways we do that is Psalm 69:30 *I will praise the name of God with a song and will magnify him with thanksgiving.*

1 Peter 4:17-18 For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if *it first begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

- a) The believers are being persecuted for what is godly and for being righteous. On the other hand, it's going to be worse for those who do not believe.
- b) If the believers are going through all this pain and heartache for the sake of the Gospel, the unbelievers will not escape having rejected the free gift of salvation.
- c) The believer is scarcely saved from the persecution. This is not speaking of eternal salvation. A believer in Christ is not scarcely saved because he has an eternal redemption (Hebrews 9:12,15).
- d) It mentions the words "righteous" which indicates that these are already in right standing with God.

- e) To obey the Gospel is to believe it. NT obedience is in believing the Gospel (2 Thessalonians 1:8)

1 Peter 4:19 Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls *to him* in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

- a) The only suffering that is the will of God is persecution, not sickness, disappointment, and poverty.
- b) Many times, we encounter a situation and we think we have no way out. Not true. God will and can create one. God can make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. He can invent or create a new means of deliverance never seen before.
- i) God is in the creation or creative business and department.
 - ii) God is faithful. He is trustworthy and dependable. He will not disappoint us and has never.
 - iii) We should be trusting and believing God to creatively come up with a way to redeem us from any situation.
 - iv) God is a faithful creator. We need to trust Him to create a way where there is none. He has creative ideas and ways He can intervene. God is a creative God and He created everything.