

# The Exiled Life 1 Peter 4:12-19

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[0:00] If you are a guest with us today, we are going to be looking at the book of 1 Peter. 1 Peter, we will be in chapter 4. I'll name the specific verses in a moment.

1 Peter was written to a group of people who he calls the elect exiles. And so our sermon series title is The Exiled Life Because of Our Allegiance and Faith in Christ.

Because he has chosen us, that has put us at odds with the world system in which we are in. And as a result of being put at odds, there is adversity, there is suffering, there is persecution.

And because of that persecution, Peter spends an exhaustive amount of time in the book of 1 Peter writing to believers who are indeed a persecuted people, who are suffering.

And so today, we are going to conclude a portion of the book of 1 Peter speaking to the persecution aspect of being a believer in Christ.

[1:12] So we're going to summarize that. Peter is going to conclude that section today. And we're going to be looking at 1 Peter chapter 4, verse 12. But in the air that we breathe as Americans, and it's baked into our Declaration of Independence, this concept of wanting life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

And we internalize that, though, as believers and as Americans, we often think, well, that means I am entitled to a life of luxury, one of comfort, and a life that is more prosperous than the previous generation.

That's how many think. And if not careful, we as Christians can even fall into that same line of thinking. Without saying it out loud, many believers think this way as well.

And nothing challenges the American dream more pointedly than trials and suffering. It disrupts, trials and suffering disrupts our expectations of God's protection, of his power, of his goodness.

In fact, when we look at Job, who suffered greatly in the Bible, this man Job, he questions why he was even born. His affliction was so great, he questioned why he was even born.

[2:34] And if the suffering of God in his life even had a plan.

Furthermore, we can look at Dietrich Bonhoeffer and his faithfulness to the Lord ended up in prison and ultimately his execution.

And so Peter wants to rightly frame for us how are we to think about persecution. And he summarizes it. So today we're going to look at four lessons that we see in our passage today that Peter is writing us to help us frame how we should think about suffering.

How should we think about persecution? The first lesson that we learn is found in verse 12. We're going to be reading from 12 to 19 today, but I want to stop at verse 12.

In verse 12 we find our first lesson and the first lesson could be written this way. We should expect suffering. It's not flashy. It's rather straightforward.

We should expect suffering. When we look at verse 12, it reads this way. Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you and to test you.

[3:46] As something strange were happening to you. As though something strange were happening to you. So he says it in two different ways we should expect suffering. In fact, it was so it says, do not be surprised.

There's the first way. Do not be surprised. You should expect this. Secondly, as though something strange were happening to you. There's two ways that Peter is emphasizing in this one verse, you should expect suffering.

And why does he place such emphasis on this anticipation of suffering? Well, because oftentimes we think the opposite.

We are surprised. We are troubled. We are confused. We anticipate the opposite. We anticipate the blessing of the Lord.

We anticipate the benefits of God's divine protection. And so when suffering afflicts us, it takes us a little bit by surprise. And Peter is saying to us, to the audience of 1 Peter, those who are dispersed in what is Asia Minor, Turkey, modern day Turkey today.

[4:54] He's writing to them and he says, oh, no, no, no, no, no. No, the suffering that you face, that's actually, you should expect that. And so for us today, we too should expect that.

Jesus' own words we read in John 15, 18, it says this way, if the world hates you, know that it first hated me before it hated you. And Paul says it this way to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3, 12.

Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. We are told over and over in Scripture to expect persecution. We are to expect suffering.

We are given, though, the purpose. It's nice to know that there's a reason, there's a purpose behind this suffering that we may face. In the verse, it is baked into there.

It says, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you. And here's the purpose, to test you. To test you. Trials and suffering are not without purpose.

[5:55] The word test is often used in a smelting of metals usage, this word to apply heat.

And so how is it that metals are more purified? Well, you apply heat, the impurities come to the surface, you wipe away the impurities, and you're left with pure gold or pure silver, whatever it is that you are looking for.

And so it is with us that the fiery trials are this heat that is added to our life to rise to the surface the impurities that are within us and to purge them from our lives.

That's the purpose. That's one of the intentions of suffering, of persecution. There is nothing like suffering to bring to the surface what is in our hearts.

Those character qualities that are impure will surface. Will they not? Those virtues that are underdeveloped will rise to the surface. Those areas of doubt in our faith will rise to the surface.

[6:58] So that the light of Christ can shine on those things, wipe them away, and we be purified. Paul illustrates this point of purifying and refining and developing character in us in Romans 5, verses 3 through 5.

I believe we have this on the screen. Not only that, Paul writes to the Romans, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and this hope does not put us to shame.

And on he goes. So, Paul was rejoicing in suffering because of the character that it was producing in himself.

One of the things that suffering does also is it shakes our confidence of God's presence.

Because we think, where is God in the middle of this? I think this is where the sport rally car racing comes in handy.

[8:06] And I knew you knew I was going to go there. Of all the kinds of racing that I enjoy to watch, you know, Daytona 500, NASCAR, they just go around the same loop 3, 4, 500 times, and that's a race, apparently.

I like rally car racing because it's an all-wheel drive car, and it goes through forests, and it's only like a 20-mile loop, but the course has all conditions.

It could be muddy, rainy, it's often unimproved roads, and you just race this car. And I think we have an image, if I'm not mistaken. And so this is what a rally car race is, and oftentimes at the end of the race, not all cars make it.

There's often trees that are missing after the race, fence lines, sometimes sheep, unfortunately.

There are just things that get destroyed because inevitably somebody's going to go off the road.

My point is this. Yeah, you're like, well, how does this apply? The gentleman who's highlighted there in the image, there's the driver who's kind of gray-scaled out, and then there's the co-pilot.

[9:17] And that packet of paper is his instructions of what he's telling the driver. The course is happening very fast, and it's very dangerous.

And so he's yelling out commands to the driver, to the driver, here's what you can anticipate.

So I'll give you an example. This is a good command that a co-pilot could read out to the driver. He could say, one right open, 90, six left jump.

And what he just communicated is this. Let me interpret it. Your degree of turn is on a scale of one to six. If it's a sharp turn, it's a one. If it's just a slight dog leg, it's a six.

So he just said, one right open, which means, hey, we're coming up on a turn. Break hard coming into this turn, and it's to the right. It's a one.

So it's just you're going to come almost right back at you. So it's a switch back, and the turn is open. There's a wide shoulder, and so you can punch it and drift around the corner and keep going.

[10:23] So one right open. He just told them, it's a switch back, nothing's on the corner, punch it after you take the current. 90, then he gives a command, 90, six left jump.

Meaning, then in 90 meters after this sharp turn and 90 meters, there's a six left jump. So basically a slight dog leg, six turn to the left, and then all four tires are going to leave the surface of the ground.

That's okay. Keep punching. This is annoying. I will try to stand still. Six left jump.

Here's my point. The fact that you have somebody in the car telling you what to anticipate indicates his presence, not absence.

So when God here tells us, you should anticipate, you should expect persecution, that's an indication of his presence, not his absence.

[11:25] And oh, do we need to know that when we go through persecution and suffering, because nothing tests that thought like suffering. Next.

So you should expect suffering. Secondly, you should rejoice in suffering. You should rejoice in suffering. Read with me in verses 13 through 14.

But rejoice in so far as you share in Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory and of God now rests upon you.

The second lesson. So the first one, we should expect suffering. Second one, we should rejoice in suffering. Now, enduring trials is one thing.

Rejoicing in them is an altogether different, harder thing. How is it and why is it that we are to rejoice? Well, baked into these two verses are three reasons that Peter writes to say these are the reasons why you can rejoice in your suffering.

[12:38] What are they? First, verse 13. It reads, but rejoice in your suffering in so far as you share in Christ's sufferings.

The word share, it comes from the same root as the word koinonia. And so the sufferings and what we share, which means fellowship, we have fellowship with the sufferings of Christ.

Have you ever considered what it must have been like for Christ to suffer unjustly on behalf of unworthy sinners? When was the last time we consciously considered what it must have been like to suffer unjustly on behalf of unworthy people?

Well, when we suffer unjustly on behalf of unworthy sinners, we grasp that concept more acutely perhaps than we did previously.

We share a greater appreciation for Christ's sacrifice on our behalf when we suffer, resulting in our hearts more tethered to the Lord. I think of Stephen when he was stoned for his witness but to the Sanhedrin and he gazed into heaven and he saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

[13:57] Here is a man who is suffering. He is sharing in Christ's suffering. He understands it more acutely and he got to witness his Savior prior to his death.

And I think about Paul in Corinth when the Lord appeared to him and encouraged him to continue preaching amidst the adversity that he faced. He understood Christ's suffering more acutely.

There's a second reason though that is given in verse 13. It says that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. So what is the second reason for our rejoicing and suffering?

It leads to a deeper level of joy at his coming. Notice, let me read that one more time in verse 13.

That you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

When will the Lord's glory be revealed? At his second coming. And so for those who suffer, we will get to see the exalted Christ coming in his clouds.

[15:06] Coming in the clouds which is on his thigh is written King of kings and Lord of lords. Riding on a majestic horse along with his angels accompanying him. And we will see him in all of his glory.

Then ushering an era of righteousness. Oh, I look forward to that. And those who have suffered, one of the motivations that you're told that you can rejoice in your suffering is because when you see him in his glory, when it is revealed, it will all be worth it.

Paul writes a similar thing in Romans 8 verse 18. He says it this way. Oh, the glory that will be revealed when the Lord returns.

So you think the amount of suffering today is so great for you. That is nothing compared to the immeasurable glory that will be revealed when Christ returns.

And you will find yourself thinking, oh, it was worth it. It was worth it. So you can rejoice. Third reason we're given to rejoice is this.

[16:26] Rejoicing in suffering because it leads us to an experience of God's spirit. Hop down to verse 14. Latter half of the verse reads this. Because this, okay, first part of the verse.

If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed. Because the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. Some people think that an experience of God's spirit is most acutely experienced when one experiences physical healing.

Or when one begins to have this phenomenon of speaking in tongues or something like this. But that's not what Peter is saying. He says you want to experience the spirit upon you acutely.

And you want to experience that profoundly. Here's what you do. Be insulted for the name of Christ. Rejoice in that.

Because the spirit of God rests upon you. I think again of Stephen. Stephen before the Sanhedrin. Before he was stoned.

[17:32] It says this of him. And gazing at him. That is the Sanhedrin and the crowds that surround the Sanhedrin. Watching this fake trial that Stephen is on. All who sat on the council saw his face was like the face of an angel.

In that moment, Stephen was experiencing the spirit of God, if you will, resting on him. And it shone. He experienced something because of the suffering that those who don't suffer don't know.

And so I say it this way. Rejoice in suffering because it leads to an experience of God's spirit. And so reading verse 14. Because the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

Now I have a tendency to groan or complain when I suffer. I don't know about you. Or I look for an escape hatch.

Where is my exit? But when we see trials as God's word declares. It will lead us to a greater fellowship with Christ. It will lead us to a greater joy at his return.

[18:47] And it will lead us to a deeper experience with his spirit. Next. I'm on three of four points of lessons to learn.

Three of four lessons. We've looked at the first one. That we learn from suffering. Is that we should learn to expect suffering. Second. We should rejoice in suffering. And the third one.

Is this. That we should experience. Or we should examine ourselves in trials. Like as we go through trials. We should examine ourselves. As to why we're going through this trial.

Look with me in verse 15 through 18. Peter writes it this way. That let none of you suffer. As a murderer. Or as a thief. Or as an evildoer. Or as a meddler.

Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian. Let him not be ashamed. But to let him glory in that name. For it is time for judgment to begin in the household of God.

[19:44] And if it begins with us. What will become. What will be the outcome of those who do not obey the gospel of God. And if the righteousness is scarcely.

If the righteous are scarcely saved. What will become of the ungodly and the sinner. The verse suggests three questions. That we ask ourselves.

When going through trial. The first one is this. Is this trial. Due to some known sin. Or folly in my life. Notice verse 13.

Or verse 15. Let none of you suffer as a murderer. Or as a thief. Or as an evildoer. Or as a meddler. So the first question to ask ourselves. When we go through trials. Is this. In suffering.

Is this trial. Due to some known sin in my life. Approximately 10 years ago. Or so. Was the last time. I think I received a traffic violation.

[20:38] I was lovingly mailed. A ticket. To my home. By the city. Because I went through a school zone. Seven miles over. What I ought to have. And so the photo was taken of me.

And then I got this ticket. Now let's assume. I go in. To the office. The next day. And say. Pastor Jay. You won't believe. What happened to me. I am being persecuted.

For my faith. Look at this traffic violation. Pastor Jay. Is going to say. Listen. That's just a consequence. Of being an evildoer. Yeah.

And so. That's the first question. We should ask. Is. Is this trial. That I'm going through. Just a consequence. Of my own folly. Or sin. Because that category.

Is great. We all have. Consequences. Of our sin. And of the folly. That we have. And when I think of folly. I think of this.

[21:38] The meddler. You know. That's in the consequence there. It's in the verse there. Murderer. Thief. Evildoer. And then there's a meddler. And we think. Oh. It's not so bad. I mean. To meddle.

Well. Actually. It made the list. With murderer. And so.

There's a lot of. Relationships. That have consequences. Because of relational. Harm. That is caused. That is not a matter. Of persecution. Or. Because of your.

Stand for Christ. It's just that you. Have not matured. And how to relate. To one another. Healthy. So. So let's. So the first question.

Is. Is this trial. Due to some. Sin. Or folly. In my life. Second question. Him. How can I glorify. God. In this trial. The verse.

[22:35] 16. Says it this way. Yet. If anyone. Suffers as a Christian. Let him not be ashamed. But let him. Glorify God. In that name. So the situation.

If. If the suffering. Is not the result. Of sin. But because of your. Stand for Christ. Then you have nothing. To be ashamed of. And. And then let. Your continued life.

And behavior. Glorify God. Because there's nothing. To be ashamed of. The world. May hate you. They may beat you. They may imprison you. They may confiscate something.

That's okay. They may malign you. You have nothing. To be ashamed of. Hold your head high. Continue to walk. With the Lord. And glorify God. In that name.

In the name of Christ. I think of. Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Here he is. Imprisoned. At the end of World War II.

[23:33] In Germany. For standing for Christ. And how does. Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Behave.

While in prison. How does he glorify God. In that name. How is he unashamed. Of what he has done. Here's what a camp. Doctor. Said.

Of Bonhoeffer. He said. I saw Pastor Bonhoeffer. Often kneeling. On the floor. Praying fervently. To God. I was deeply moved. By the way.

This lovable man. Prayed. So devoted. And so certain. That God heard his prayer. So how can you glorify God.

In the midst of this trial. Thirdly. The other question. We should ask is. Have I considered. The depth of my sin. And the eternal perspective.

[24:28] In this trial. Here's what verse. 17 and 18 read. For at this time. For judgment to begin. At the household of God.

And if it begins with us. What will be the outcome. Of those who do not obey. The gospel of God. And if the righteous. Is scarcely saved. What will become.

Of the ungodly. And the sinner. Peter here. Is. Is saying. Basically this.

Judgment. Upon sin. Begins with the household of God. So. One of the ways. God. Judges. If you will. Is he allows. Suffering to occur. In our life. Impurities.

Rise to the surface. We become more pure. And more and more. Like Christ. And so. Judgment must begin. With the household of the God. And if you think. That is too hard. Of a concept.

[25:24] He said. If you don't like. That form of judgment. Think about those. Without Christ. What is their. Recourse. Eternal. Flames.

Of hell. So he says. Judgment must begin. With the household of God. It must begin with us. And so. You can rejoice. In this suffering. Because it began with you. And you don't have to. Face. And eternity. Separated from the Lord. This is your judgment.

Upon sin. Because. And respond well. To Christ. In the middle of it. Suffering helps us. Gain. An eternal perspective. That's the point. When was the last time. Let me just pause. I know we're not to the end. Of the message yet. When was the last time though.

[26:21] You just paused. And said. Lord thank you. For this adversity. Thank you for calling me. Unto your own. And getting to suffer. In this way. For your name's sake.

Because. I have been rescued. From an eternity. Separated from you. Thank you Lord. It helps add. Perspective.

To our life. Fourth lesson. That is in our. Text. Today. As we. Consider. Suffering. Adversity. Persecution. Is this.

So let me. Remind us. Of the previous three. We should expect suffering. We should rejoice. In suffering. We should examine ourselves. In trials. And then thirdly.

Or lastly. Fourthly. We should entrust ourselves. To God. In the midst of the trials. We should entrust ourselves. To the Lord. Verse 19.

[27:19] Reads this. Therefore. Let those who suffer. According to God's will. Entrust their souls. To the faithful. Creator.

While doing good. Therefore. Let those who suffer. According to God's will. Entrust their souls. To. To the faithful.

Creator. While doing good. Where are we encouraged to go. In suffering. We are to entrust. Our souls.

To a faithful creator. Entrust. Is a. Is a banking term. That is meant. To put. In deposits. One's valuables. To another. For safe keeping.

And so. The imagery here. Is. We are to. Put. As a deposit. Our soul. Into the safe keeping. Of the creator. God. God.

[28:12] What's interesting. Is this is the only time. Specifically stated. That God is creator. In the new testament. So think about. The one. Who created. All things.

He created the heavens. And the earth. And all of the stars. And he knows them. Each by name. He created. He created. Mankind. He created. He created.

All that we see. He transcends. That. And he's. He is. And Peter is saying. You know where you ought to entrust your soul to.

That one. Who stands outside of space. And time. Who created all things. And entrust your soul. To that one. Who created you. It's in safe keeping.

That is where we are to run. He is the one. To whom we are to run. And why is this so important?

[29:10] Well there are. Alternatives. We entrust ourselves. To some. Poor substitutes. People will say.

In a time of adversity. And suffering. And they will. Entrust themselves. To self-reliance. And to resolve. Just to gut it out. And get through it. And I can do this.

I can power through it. Under my own strength. That's an option. It's a poor substitute. Number two. We can. We can.

Entrust ourselves. To others approval. Oh you're doing great. You just keep going. The way you handled that. Superb. We can entrust ourselves.

To some. To some. By escaping. By some. Numbing mechanism. A numbing mechanism.

[30:08] Could be. Entertainment. Comfort. Distractions. Some. Substance abuse. Where we escape.

We can. We can. We can. We can. We can. Also. Just become. Bitter. And. Poor substitute. Would be. Just bitterness. And moral.

Or. Moral superiority. And you say. Well how does that play out. Scott. Well. If. I'm suffering. And I did right.

Well then that must mean. I'm better than you. I'm being morally superior. Some do this. Suffering is a proof.

Of my moral superiority. Or we get very resentful. And. Harden our heart to the Lord. Instead of entrusting our souls. To a faithful creator.

[31:04] And do good. While doing good. So in conclusion. Peter is communicating to us. And he's communicating to this.

First century church. In Asia Minor. Where. He is summing up. His. Passage.

On persecution. And he is saying to us. And he's reminding us. Hey church. You should expect suffering. You should rejoice in suffering. You should examine yourself.

In time of trial. And would you please. Entrust yourself to God. Who judges righteously. And keep doing good. And may we do that church. Let's pray.

Father. Father. You are so good to us. I thank you. That you are. The creator God. The one who has created. The heavens and the earth.

[32:00] Who knows all things. Lord. I thank you. There is no. No comparison. To anyone. Who could care for us more.

Than the one who created us. We love you. We thank you so much. I pray that we would. Endure suffering. I thank you Lord. That you have told us. To prepare for suffering.

And to expect suffering. And that it shouldn't. Keep us. Take us by surprise. And the very fact. That you told us. What to anticipate. Indicates. Your. Presence.

And not your absence. Lord. We. We. We revel in that. We marvel at your word. And we love you so much. And it's in your name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.