

# Suffering and Discipleship

I Peter 4:12-19

We've been in a series on Discipleship... we talked about (1) *"Sacrifice and Discipleship"* = we are called to sacrifice our will for the Lord's. (2) *"Conforming and Discipleship"* = God is the Potter, we are the Clay, life the wheel that turns; uses pressures of circumstances to molds us to be more like Him. (3) *"Dedication and Discipleship"* = Jesus wants us to dedicate ourselves as a Living Sacrifice for Him. Today... our subject weighs-in on a tough subject: **Luke 14:27** Jesus says, *"And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."* The word, "Cross" simply implies the principle of "Suffering..."

If you are a Disciple of Jesus, you are going to have times of hurt, pain, and suffering. There will be fiery trials. If they haven't hit you yet, get ready because they will come. And...you guessed it; if some *have come*, be prepared because others will come your way again from time to time.

But... Suffering can seem strange to a new Christian or a new Disciple. A person gets saved and is riding the "joy-wave" = knowing his sins are forgiven. He starts serving God and then suddenly everything goes to pieces. A fiery trial hits his faith "right in the face." Hey... Peter did not always know this himself = (*Matt. 16:21-23: Jesus was telling His disciples that He was about to suffer and be crucified and raise again the 3<sup>rd</sup> day; and Peter said, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee."* Then Jesus gave a stinging rebuke to Peter!) Peter had his 'ups-and-downs' but eventually he locked-in for the long haul! If we are saved, we are going to suffer from time to time... Here are some simple thoughts for the Disciples...

## I. The Trial

### A. It is Proof of our faith – I Pet. 1:7. Trial – GK. (*dok-im'-ee-on* - a testing)

1. **V. 3** = we learn – Suffering happens to Saved folk! The words, "our" / "us"
2. **V. 4** = we learn – Suffering has an end! "To an inheritance "incorruptible..." (It will not decay).
3. **V. 5** = we learn – Suffering is controlled by God! We are kept by His Power!

### B. It is Pounding at the time – V.6 – "...ye are in heaviness..." Kinds of fiery trials...

1. **Ch. 2: 20** – "Buffeted" for well doing – to rap with the fist. (*People can "knock the wind out..."*)
2. **Ch. 2: 23** – "Reviled" (*People can hate, detest despise you for who you are...*)
3. **Ch. 3:9** – "Exposed to railings" (*People can slander you; or sling insults against your credibility*)
4. **Ch. 3: 14** – "Terror" (*People can do things to intimidate or cause great fear / scare the daylights!*)
5. **Ch. 4: 14** "Reproached for the name of Christ"; "Evil spoken of" (*People can criticize us behind our backs / scold or rebuke us to our face*)
6. OLD SAYING: As a kid on the school playground, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me"...huh, yeah right!

### C. It is Purposeful for our character – V.6 "...if need be..." LOOK AT: Psalms 66:10-12

1. God knows that we need to go through trials.
  - a. Trials discipline us when we have disobeyed God's Will – **Psalms 119:67** "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word."
  - b. Trials prepare us for Spiritual Growth.
  - c. Trials prevent us from having PRIDE – (Apostle Paul's thorn in the flesh – **II Cor.12: 1-9**).
2. God burns out the flaws.
  - a. Hot temper; False pride; Laziness; Stubbornness
3. God brings us to a place of great wealth. **Job 23:10** "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

## II. The Comfort

### A. **Ch. 4: V.12** – "Beloved..." We are loved of God - **Romans 8:31-39** – 3 fallacies refuted in suffering...

1. God is not mad at us when we suffer.
2. God has not forsaken us in the suffering. God is not dissatisfied – even if the Devil lies to us.
3. God has not singled us out to suffer alone – **I Pet. 5:9**.

- B. V.12** – “...think it not strange...” Paul is saying that we are to expect them... *WHY?*
1. Because we are associated with Christ – “*Likewise*” – **Ch. 4:1** = Partnership!
  2. Because Satan hates us – we are the Object of God’s Love! **I Pet. 5:8** – There are special times when the Devil himself attacks.

**III. The Instructions** – 4 things to do when we are in a trial...

- A. Ch. 4:13** – Rejoice “in” the trials – “But rejoice” *WHY?* He is Supervising my trials – **I Pet. 5:10** “...a while...”

1. **I Cor. 10:13** “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

- B. V. 16** – Don’t be ashamed of the trials.

1. **II Timothy 1:12** – Paul said, “For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”

- C. V. 19** – Commit your keeping to Him. (Let God Handle It!)

1. Know that God is Sovereign and in control. He’s completely aware of everything!
2. Live day by day. Each day, ask God to help you to get through that day.

- D. Ch. 5:7** – Cast all your care upon Him. Burdens, cares, fears, dread; trials are to be cast upon Him.

Are you going through a trial? Know that God loves you. He is testing your faith to strengthen you so He can use you and bless you even more. Trust Him completely. Allow Him mature you.