

Sermon Notes, 1 Peter 4:12-19, Sunday 14th Nov 2021

Introduction

Christians who are mistreated after acts of kindness / living out their faith. Much of 1 Peter about general hardships of life, here more specific: Suffering because you're a Christian

Two very natural responses.

Surprised. Morally upright, showing kindness – how come we're hated for it? Peter says: Don't be surprised. Verse 12. Come back to language of fiery trial – but says don't be surprised by it. Not "something strange" that doesn't belong / shouldn't be. Actually, Peter says it's not strange -> it's normal.

Ashamed. Get treated like a criminal, easy to start to think you must have done something wrong. Then means you become ashamed you're a Christian / slightly apologetic – at least keep it quiet. Peter says: Do not be ashamed (16) – provided of course that is the reason for your suffering (15)

Don't be surprise. Don't be ashamed. Well, then what?

Answer surprising: Rejoice (13). Praise God (16).

Framework to get in place to be help you do this when the moment comes.

God is testing you

Verse 12.

God is not testing you to get you to fail. He wants to prove your faith is genuine. Proving bread. Only way to prove faith real is to test it. Parable of sower. Seeds in rocky ground. Look the same until the sun shines.

Which means: suffering for being a Christian is really unpleasant, but God uses it to test us – to prove we're genuine.

That's where the language of fiery ordeal comes from. How they purified and tested metals were genuine. Melt silver. Burning how. Impurities burn away. Left with pure silver. If wasn't metal at all, be left with nothing.

IKEA. Tillgång.

God is with you

Look at the past, present and future

Past

13a. Treating you like Jesus. Wonderful thing. Peter himself, in Acts 5, arrested for preaching Jesus alive. Confer. Then (5:40-41). Matthew 5:11-12.

You're in good company. Being treated how Jesus was treated.

Present

14. God's Spirit is with you. If persecuted, being a Christian can feel very lonely. But not alone.

Spirit “of glory and of God”. Bringing together “God” and “glory” reminds us of God in heaven, on throne, where we one day will be. It’s *that* Spirit who is with us.

Foretaste of what’s to come. Elsewhere, Paul speaks of him as deposit / guarantee. House / car purchase. God’s guarantee rest to follow

Future

13, stress 13b. Day to come when you will be literally with Jesus. That will be a day for such joy. Can rejoice now, even though we’re suffering, knowing we will one day be with him. “Nothing will take away your joy”

God is beginning the judgement.

Something else going on. 16b. Why? 17a.

OT expectation: God will come and judge the world, remove evil, rescue his people. But purging the world of evil starts with God’s own people.

Peter’s point: If God uses the suffering of his people to bring his loving fatherly discipline, then the process has begun.

Which means process will complete. 17b-18.

Pruning roses. First cut back stems of the plants that finished flowering. But then dig out the ones that last year’s pruning killed as evidenced by total lack of life.

Implication for those not Christians. Thought of suffering puts you off, not just Christians who suffer. At least for them: Fatherly discipline, and on their way home to a world free of suffering. Peter says: Those who face judgement without Christ will suffer far more, no good outcome at end of it

For those of us who are: Suffering is God preparing you for heaven. It will end, and even means end has begun.

Conclusion

As Christians, still suffer. Sometimes because we are Christians. Serve a Jesus who suffered. That’s how he saved us. So it’s to be expected. “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first.”

Rather than giving up as a Christian because of surprise or shame, even when suffering, possible to rejoice and to keep praising God.

How? Well start is to see things right way up. God tests us, prove our genuineness. God is with us – even as we suffer, the Spirit of glory rests on us, as we look forward to that day of overwhelming joy. And even our sufferings are the beginning of God cleansing this world of pain, ready for that glorious future.