**Judgment to Begin at the House of God**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**1 Peter 4:12-19**

**Wednesday Evening**

**April 12, 2023**

**1 Peter 4:12-19**

12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. 16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.

17 For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" 19 Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

**12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.**

Saints, Christians ought not be surprised at the fiery trials they were going through. Like Christ, Christians should expect to face persecution.

**James 1:2-8**

2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

**Romans 5:1-5**

1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

This was not something that strange—persecution had followed the gospel from the time of Jesus’ crucifixion.

Believers should expect persecution and suffering because they are part of God’s plan to perfect Christians.

**Matthew 5:10**

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Even Christ was not spared from persecution.

**Romans 8:32**

“He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”

Saints, instead of being bewildered by trials, Peter exhorted the believers to be very glad because when they suffered for their faith in Christ, they were becoming partners with Christ in his suffering.

If we suffer, it shows our identification with Christ and it shows that our faith is genuine. Since Christ was persecuted, we also will be persecuted and, thereby, participate in his suffering.

If we persevere, we will enjoy our future inheritance with him. Servants who know the suffering of Christ will have the wonderful joy of sharing his glory.

This does not mean that all suffering is the result of good Christian conduct. Sometimes a person will grumble,

“He’s just picking on me because I’m a Christian,” when it’s obvious to everyone else that the person’s own unpleasant behavior is the cause of his or her problems.

It may take careful thought or wise counsel to determine the real cause of our suffering. We can be assured, however, that whenever we suffer because of our loyalty to Christ, he will be with us all the way.

**14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.**

**Matthew 5:11-12**

11 "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

**Luke 6:22-23**

22 Blessed are you when men hate you, And when they exclude you, And revile you, and cast out your name as evil, For the Son of Man's sake. 23 Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.

Saints, Peter offered a specific example of the type of suffering the believers might face.

To be insulted means to face verbal abuse, to be reviled, ridiculed, or slandered. Not only will suffering believers find great joy when Christ returns,

but the glorious Spirit of God (that is, the Holy Spirit) would come upon them.

Christ will send his Spirit to strengthen those who are persecuted for their faith.

**15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters.**

Saints, Peter has made the point that not all suffering results in blessing. If believers must suffer, it must be because of their faith, for that alone results in blessing.

**Galatians 5:19-21**

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,

21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God

They ought not be counted among those who murder, steal, do evil, or meddle in other people’s matters.

Such people deserve the punishment and suffering they receive, and there is no blessing in such suffering.

**16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.**

**Romans 1:16-17**

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

Saints, Peter reminded his readers that it was no shame to suffer for being a Christian.

While believers ought not seek out suffering, neither should they try to avoid it. Instead, Peter admonished them to keep on doing what was right regardless of the suffering it might bring.

In that suffering they could praise God for the privilege of being called by his wonderful name. As bearers of Christ’s name, Christians are his representatives on this earth;

therefore, in everything they do, including what might seem like shameful suffering, they can glorify God.

**17 For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?**

this time for judgment refers both to final judgment and also to God’s refining discipline. Peter warned that God judges all people according to their deeds. He also disciplines and judges his own children in order to refine them. This judgment purifies and strengthens believers, readying them for God’s Kingdom. But for those who have never believed God’s Good News, the judgment will be a terrible fate. If the righteous (believers) experience difficulty in their refining process, how much more horrible will be the great disaster experienced for eternity by the godless and sinners who chose to reject Christ.

**Philippians 2:12-13**

12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

The phrase barely saved means “with difficulty.” Peter was not introducing uncertainty to the believers’ salvation. Instead, he was talking about the difficult road believers must travel. It is not easy to be a Christian; we must count the cost.

**19 Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.**

Saints, with the word so, Peter drew a conclusion to his words in the previous verses. Peter consistently encouraged his readers that their suffering was all under God’s control.

If they suffered for the faith, they were suffering according to God’s will. Their suffering was not because God had lost control; rather, all that happens to believers is according to his will.

While it is difficult to accept that one’s suffering is part of God’s plan, we can find comfort in understanding that, as part of God’s will, suffering has a reason, a goal, and an end.

For believers, suffering is a purifying process to draw us closer to God. Thus, in times of suffering, believers must trust themselves to the God who made them. The word “trust” means to give over to someone for safekeeping. Jesus used the word on the cross.

**Luke 23:46**

And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.' " Having said this, He breathed His last.

This also follows Christ’s example. If the believers trusted themselves to the one who created them, they would have nothing to fear.

Even in suffering, as Peter had admonished throughout his letter, the Christians must keep on doing what is right. Peter often recommended doing good works as a response to being persecuted.

Paul also recommended this response.

**Romans 12:14-18**

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. 16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.

17 Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

Saints, if the believers would “do good” even in the face of injustice, they would reveal that they truly had entrusted themselves to God,

that they were suffering for their faith alone, which is commendable before God, and that their attitude toward suffering might draw others to faith as well.

God created the world, and he has faithfully ordered it and kept it since the creation. Because we know that God is faithful, we know that he will never fail us.

If God can oversee the forces of nature, surely he can see us through the trials we face. We must never doubt his loving concern for us or his ability to rescue us.

Saints, Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Short Movie Slide>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**