

How do we work through our difficulties, not our way, but God's way?

*2 Tim.3:10 You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, <sup>11</sup> persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. <sup>12</sup> In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted ...*

I. The Response to Suffering, v.12-13.

A. There is a proper response to suffering, v.12, 13a.

1. Expect it, v.12.

*<sup>12</sup> Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.*

a. Suffering is not to surprise the believer.

*Jn.15:18 "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. <sup>19</sup> If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. <sup>20</sup> Remember what I told you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.*

b. Suffering is not something strange to the believer, v.12.

2. View suffering as valuable: It is the believer's opportunity to prove that their faith is real.

3. Rejoice in it, v.13a.

*<sup>13</sup> But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ,*

*Mat.5:11 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad..."*

B. Understand the reason for this response, v.13.

*<sup>13</sup> But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.*

1. Because we share in Christ's sufferings.

2. Because we will then have great joy at Christ's return.

C. Application: How are we living our lives for Christ ... out there?

II. The Basis of Suffering, v.14-16.

*<sup>14</sup> If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. <sup>15</sup> If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. <sup>16</sup> However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.*

A. The form of suffering.

1. It can be verbal, v.14.

2. It is an "infliction," v.16.

B. The reasons for suffering.

1. For the name of Christ, v.14.

*<sup>43</sup> For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. <sup>4</sup> They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you.*

2. For the name "Christian," v.16.

3. Not for sin, v.15.

2. Jesus taught about these harbingers, Mat.24.

C. The results of suffering.

1. We are blessed, v.14.
2. We have God's Spirit in us, v.14.
3. We are not to be ashamed, v.16.
4. We are to give praise to God, v.16.

D. Application:

III. The Timing of Suffering, v.17-18.

*"For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? <sup>18</sup>And, "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"*

A. Suffering marks the beginning of the end.

1. Peter uses three key words which are "end-time" words.
  - 1) "Time" ~ refers to a fixed time or season of time
  - 2) "Judgment"
  - 3) "End"

B. Suffering begins with God's people.

1. The "judgments" believers face are harbingers of the end.

Harbinger ~ "something that foreshadows a future event: something that gives an anticipatory sign of what is to come." Merriam-Webster Dictionary

- a. The general signs of the coming of Christ, v.4-14.

**Mat.24:8 "All these are but the beginning of the birth pains."**

- b. The specific signs of the great tribulation, v.15-25.
- c. The second coming of Christ, His return, v.26-31.

C. Final judgment comes to the unbeliever.

D. Application: If we can have a better understanding of suffering, we'll be able to respond to it in a way that indeed pleases the Lord.

IV. The Action in Suffering, v.19.

*<sup>19</sup> So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.*

A. Be submissive to the will of God.

B. Be committed to God.

*1 Pet.2:23 When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.*

C. Be continuously doing good.

*1 Peter 2:12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.*

Conclusion: Be encouraged: Keep on being faithful!