

1 Peter 4 - Responsibilities of the Believer; Believers Conduct in Light of Coming Judgment; Suffering: A Cause for Rejoicing

III. Suffering: discipline of the Christian (1 Peter 3:13—5:14)

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(A) Consummation of suffering (4:7-11)

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(B) Consolation of suffering (4:12-19)

1 Peter 4

(3) Purity in suffering (4:1-6)

1 Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because the one who has suffered in the flesh has **ceased** from sin,

1 Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,

1 Therefore, since the Messiah suffered in a mortal body, you, too, must arm yourselves with the same determination, because the person who has suffered in a mortal body has stopped sinning,

1 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

- The first responsibility of these believers is to be prepared for suffering, just as Jesus was prepared for His suffering

— We are to be “armed” for spiritual warfare with the “same mind” (willing to suffer for righteousness sake) as Jesus had when He endured His unjust suffering
- “...ceased” - *pauo*, past perfect tense, passive verb (middle voice in Greek) describing a pause or definite break from sin
— Peter is not saying that by suffering, believers cease to sin. Trying to escape persecution by denying the faith would be sin, but those who suffer in the flesh have “paused” from sinning.

2 so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human lusts, but for the will of God.

2 so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.

2 so that he can live the rest of his mortal life guided, not by human desires, but by the will of God.

2 That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

- Peter encourages these believers to no longer live “in the flesh” (pleasing the sin nature), but instead do “the will of God”

— With Christ as our example of patience in suffering, how can we—who owe everything to Him—do any less than arm ourselves with the same “mind” and so demonstrate that we are His by faith?

— Often God uses suffering to keep us from going into that which would dishonor Him

Rom 8:5-6:

5 For those who are in accord with the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are in accord with the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,

3 For the **time already past** is sufficient *for you* to have carried out the desire of the **Gentiles**, having pursued a course of **indecent behavior, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties, and wanton idolatries**.

3 For the time already past is sufficient *for you* to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries.

3 For you spent enough time in the past doing what the gentiles like to do, living in sensuality, sinful desires, drunkenness, wild celebrations, drinking parties, and detestable idolatry.

3 For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:

- Peter presents another responsibility of these Jewish believers, which is to not live according to the conduct of the Gentiles
- "...time already past" - they essentially "wasted time" by previously behaving like Gentiles (the world)
- Peter tells them that they have already wasted enough of their most *inelastic* resource
- "...Gentiles" - *ethnos*, nations, non-Jews; demonstrates again that Peter is writing to Jewish believers who lived among a Gentile majority (Cf. 2:12)
- Covenant theologians like to twist the plain meaning of Gentiles to refer not to people who are not Jews, but to people who are not Christians
- However, there are no exegetical grounds to claim that when Peter writes the word Gentiles, he means "non-believers"
- In the past, these Jewish believers have been tempted to also follow the Gentiles in fulfilling the lusts of the flesh. Peter lists six manifestations of the "will of the Gentiles":
- "...indecent behavior" - refers to excesses of all kinds of evil and a lack of self-restraint, including all kinds of moral impurity
- "...lusts" - depraved cravings
- "...drunkenness" - *oinophlygia*, "to overflow"; drunkenness that is habitual
- "...carousing" - riots and festive gatherings that lead to drunkenness and result in wicked acts
- "...drinking parties" - carousings; get-togethers for the purpose of drunkenness and other debaucheries
- "...wanton idolatries" - includes all types of idolatrous acts
- These lusts of the flesh were past aspects—a time when the Jewish believers desired to live according to the conduct of the Gentiles

4 In *all* this, they are surprised that you do not run with *them* in the same excesses of debauchery, and they **slanderyou**;

4 In *all* this, they are surprised that you do not run with *them* into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign *you*;

4 They insult you now because they are surprised that you are no longer joining them in the same excesses of wild living.

4 Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:

- Peter, previously addressing their former aspect (v3), now addresses their present

— Now, the Gentiles thought it strange that these (now believing) Jews did not indulge in these things with them

- "...slander" - refers to the abundant outpouring of excess, lacking any self-control, while attacking the believer and God

— The point is that these Gentiles are now watching these new Jewish believers and thought it was strange that the Jews no longer acted like the Gentiles did

5 but they will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

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5 They will give an account to the one who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

5 Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

- Peter now points out the future aspect: these Gentiles will give an account for their dealings with these Jews, and will someday be judged for their actions

— We are all to live so as to give account, not to men, but to Him who will judge the living and the dead when He returns in power (2 Cor 5:10)

6 For the gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead, that though they are judged in the flesh as people, they may live in the spirit according to *the will of God*.

6 For the gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead, that though they are judged in the flesh as men, they may live in the spirit according to *the will of God*.

6 Indeed, this is why the gospel was proclaimed even to those who have died, so that they could be judged in their mortal flesh like all humans and live in the spiritual realm like God.

6 For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

- "For" - begins an explanation of the previous statement

- "...gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead" - Peter is writing about a definite, historical event where Christ was the subject, but not necessarily the Preacher

— The dead are those who are now dead but who were preached to while still alive

— The purpose of the preaching is that they might be "judged according to men in the flesh" (meaning they were condemned by men and martyred) but "live according to God in the spirit" (meaning that they were spiritually saved).

— The death and resurrection of Jesus guarantees the final coming judgment for the unbeliever but, for the believer, it is an encouragement to live spiritually."

(4) Suffering as a saint (4:7-19)

(A) Consummation of suffering (4:7-11)

(a) Doctrine of the consummation of all things (4:7a)

(b) Duty of the believer in light of the consummation (4:7b-11)

(i) Sobriety (4:7b)

(ii) Prayer (4:7c)

7 The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and **sober spirit** for the **purpose of prayer**.

7 The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober *spirit* for the purpose of prayer.

7 Because everything will soon come to an end, be sensible and clear-headed, so you can pray.

7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

- "The end of all things is near" - the judgment in view is the judgment of 70 AD, the judgment of the Unpardonable Sin

— It is in light of this impending judgment that Peter urges them to practice the following six instructions:

- "...sober" - *sophroneo*, to be sober minded, of a sound mind; be intelligent

— Speaks of one who is in his right mind, in contrast to one who is demonized (Mark 5:15; Luke 8:35). It refers to one who is reasonable, sensible, retains a clear mind.

— These Jewish believers were to exercise self-control and balance in their reactions

- "...purpose of prayer" - in contrast to drunkenness, believers are to be prayerful; in contrast to a mind clouded with alcohol, they should have a sober mind characterized by prayer; their mind should be focused on the things of God

(iii) Love (4:8)

8 Above all, keep **fervent in your love for one another**, because love **covers a multitude of sins**.

8 Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.

8 Above all, continue to love each other deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins.

8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

- "...fervent in your love for one another" - the most important of the six instructions: these believers were to be "fervent" in their love among themselves

— "fervent" - to strain, to stretch out; emphasizes the intensity of effort

— "love" - *agape*, a love of the *will*; the kind of love every believer can *will* to exercise

- "...covers a multitude of sins" - a proverbial statement from Prov 10:12 (Cf. James 5:20)

— The love of the brethren means to forgive sins committed against each other; if they love their brother, they would forgive his sins and not retaliate

(iv) Hospitality (4:9)

9 Be **hospitable** to one another without complaint.

9 Be hospitable to one another without complaint.

9 Show hospitality to one another without complaining.

9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

- "...hospitable" - the spiritual gift of making guests feel comfortable and at home (Cf. Rom 12:13)

— Offering food and shelter is a concrete way to show the love for the brethren

— This was important because, as a result of their faith, Jewish believers were often cut off from friends and family. Thus, they needed to experience the love of the brethren, especially in the realm of hospitality.

— The books of 2 John and 3 John give us examples of hospitality...

— In 2 John, the problem was that heretics and false teachers were coming into homes, taking advantage of hospitality (the early church met in homes). John urged believers to not provide hospitality to these people whose doctrine was off base.

— In 3 John, the problem was that hospitality was not being shown to believers whose doctrine was correct.

(v) Use of spiritual gifts (4:10)

10 As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in **serving one another** as good **stewards of the manifold grace of God**.

10 As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

10 As good servant managers of God's grace in its various forms, serve one another with the gift each of you has received.

10 As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

- "...gift" - *charismata*, "a gift of grace" or "grace gift"

— The root word is "grace" meaning the gift is undeserved and cannot be earned

— The Greek word is almost exclusively used by Paul; this is the only place it's used outside of Paul's writings (Paul uses it 11x)

— This verse teaches that every believer has received at least one spiritual gift

- "...serving one another" - the believer must use their gift(s) among the Body

— The purpose for our spiritual gift(s) is to build up (edify) the body

— It is the believer's responsibility of ministering the gifts among believers

- "...stewards of the multifaceted grace of God" - a spiritual gift is a stewardship that God has given to the believer by His grace; thus, the believer has a responsibility to use it wisely [we *exercise* gifts; we *inspect* fruit]

(vi) Glorification of God in all things (4:11)

11 Whoever **speaks** *is to do so as one who is speaking actual words of God*; whoever **serves** *is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies*; so that **in all things** God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

11 Whoever speaks, *is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God*; whoever serves *is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies*; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

11 Whoever speaks must speak God's words. Whoever serves must serve with the strength that God supplies, so that in every way God may be glorified through Jesus, the Messiah. Glory and power belong to him forever and ever! Amen.

11 If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

- "...speaks" - four spiritual gifts are identified as speaking gifts: prophecy, teaching, exhortation, evangelism/preaching

- "...words of God" - *logion*, "oracle"; a word always used of written Scripture in the NT (Acts 7:38; Rom 3:2; Heb 5:12)

— The believers' use of the speaking gifts is based upon the written Word

- "...serves" - *diakoneō*, refers to the service (doing) gifts; this includes all sorts of deeds of kindness done with the ability God supplies. It includes all ministries other than speaking.

— *daikoneō* is the origin of the word "deacon," meaning "to serve"

- "...in all things" - refers to the six instructions Peter mentioned earlier (v7-9)

How does a believer discover their spiritual gift(s)? See [Ecclesiology 38 Spiritual Gifts - Part 17 - Gifts; Determining Your Gifts \(1 Cor 12:7\)](#), and [Spiritual Gifts, How Do We Discover Our?](#).

(B) Consolation of suffering (4:12-19)

12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the **fiery ordeal** among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though **something strange** were happening to you;

12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you;

12 Dear friends, do not be surprised by the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.

12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

- "...fiery ordeal" - denotes the severity of the persecution; it is like the pain of being exposed to fire

- These trials came upon believers to prove them. God allowed these fiery trials in order to test and refine their faith.

- "...*something* strange" - trials prove the value of a believer's faith, so to think of them as "strange" would be a false view

- Believers should view trials as a natural and usual occurrence; they should anticipate that trials will be part of their spiritual life to both test and mature their faith

13 but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, **keep on rejoicing**, so that at the revelation of His glory you may also rejoice and be overjoyed.

13 but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.

13 Instead, because you are participating in the sufferings of the Messiah, keep on rejoicing, so that you may be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed.

13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

- "...keep on rejoicing" - an imperative; a command

- Because trials are a reason to rejoice, rejoicing should be a continuous attitude

- The result of this rejoicing is that joy will be full at the Second Coming, when believers will be vindicated

- Present rejoicing prepares believers for the experience of future joy

14 If you are **insulted** for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory, and of God, **rests upon you**.

14 If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

14 If you are insulted because of the name of the Messiah, you are blessed, for the glorious Spirit of God is resting on you.

14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

- Peter addresses the fact persecution and suffering is a blessing for believers

- "...insulted" - verbally abused (Matt 10:22; Mark 13:13; Luke 21:17)

— None can be true to Christ and at the same time loved by the world and its systems. We cannot expect the approval of those who reject and misunderstand our Savior.

- As believers who are suffering for the reproach of Christ, they are reflecting the Shechinah Glory. Paul also talked about this glory in 2 Cor 3:10-18.
- "...rests upon you" - means "the manifestation of the Glory." If these believers bear Messiah's reproach, they are blessed because it shows they are reflecting the glory of God.

15 Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler;

15 Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler;

15 Of course, none of you should suffer for being a murderer, thief, criminal, or troublemaker.

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

- Believers are not to suffer for their own wrongdoings; Peter lists four things for which they are not to suffer: murder, stealing, being an evildoer, and being a busybody

16 but if *anyone suffers* as a **Christian**, he is not to be **ashamed**, but is to glorify God in this name.

16 but if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.

16 But if you suffer for being a Christian, do not feel ashamed, but glorify God with that name.

16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

- "...Christian" - only used 3x in the NT (Acts 11:26; 26:28)

— In the Acts passages the word is used by unbelievers; here is the only place in the NT where the word is used by a believer, but Peter is quoting its use by unbelievers; he intends it in a negative sense as used by unbelievers.

— At that time believers did not use the term of themselves. They preferred terms such as "brethren" or "saints" and, less often, followers of "The Way."

- "...ashamed" - believers should not be guilty of moral cowardice when they are identified as Christians; on the contrary, believers are to "glorify God" in this name

17 **For** *it* is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what *will* be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

17 For *it is* time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what *will be* the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

17 For the time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God. And if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who refuse to obey the gospel of God?

17 For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

- "For" - provides an explanation of the above exhortation

- It is appropriate for God's judgment to begin in His own house

- Temporal suffering of these Jewish believers was an initiation of the judgment that will come upon Jewish unbelievers in 70 AD

- The suffering of these Jewish believers is a testing of their faith, but for the Jewish unbelievers, the 70 AD judgment would be a punishment

- Peter then states that if discipline is severe for believers, how much more will the suffering be for non-believers when they face God's judgment?

18 AND IF IT IS WITH DIFFICULTY THAT THE RIGHTEOUS IS SAVED, WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE GODLESS MAN AND THE SINNER?

18 And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner?

18 "If it is hard for the righteous person to be saved, what will happen to the ungodly and sinful person?"

18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

- Peter's point, similar to that in v17, is that if believers are saved through difficulties, what will be the fate of unbelievers when they face God at the Great White Throne Judgment, prior to being cast into the Lake of Fire.

- Believers only suffer in time, temporarily, but the unbeliever will suffer through all eternity

- Believers can expect the discipline of God; unbelievers can expect the wrath of God

19 Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God are to entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.

19 Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.

19 So then, those who suffer according to God's will should entrust their souls to their faithful Creator and continue to do what is good.

19 Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

- Peter's concluding remark is that believers need to commit their souls to the Creator and continually entrust themselves to His protective care
- Believers need to entrust their souls to the safekeeping of God in well-doing (Phil 3:4-8)