

1st and 2nd Peter - The Series

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SLIDE 1 Introduction

In our fourth chapter today, Peter has moved completely from the idea of submission to the suffering it can induce. We saw from last week that the idea of suffering under the hands of others is contrary to what society teaches and they also cannot see any benefit from it. However Peter teaches us that submission and suffering are producing godly character in us.

And this is the example that Jesus gave us to live. As Isaiah said about the suffering Savior:

SLIDE 2 Isaiah 53:7 (NIV) *"He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth."*

Yet, the first thing we do when we are asked to suffer is tell everyone about it, rather than committing ourselves to God and submitting to his will.

SLIDE 3 "Sufferin' Succotash"

Today Peter launches into suffering and ends with the idea that if we do not judge ourselves, God will judge us. Too often the church has failed to equip the believers with these biblical principles of submission to authority, suffering for doing right, and judging ourselves, not others.

Let's continue today with 1st Peter Chapter 4:

SLIDE 4 1st Peter Chapter 4

The first thing Peter suggests in this chapter is to focus our minds on the benefits of suffering. Usually it is because God is causing a new death in us that produces life in our spirits. This kind of life is not dependent on beneficial circumstances around us, but finds its joy and peace in the Lord.

Again he introduces this chapter with a "therefore," meaning it derives its statements based on what was previously revealed about submission and suffering.

SLIDE 5 **1st Peter 3:1-22 (NKJV)** *"¹ Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, ² that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God."*

We have stated from Peter that suffering serves a purpose and sometimes it's God's will that we suffer for a season. Sometimes even our submission to authority brings on periods of suffering. In us it is perfecting our character. In those who cause the suffering, our submission unleashes the judgment of God on their lives.

We need to flee the things that God judges and embrace the things that God blesses.

SLIDE 6 *"³ For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. ⁴ In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you."*

There is no lasting satisfaction in the things the world provides. Instead of seeking rest, we need to pursue more and more to achieve the same level of numbness.

Others think it is strange that you don't want more of the things this life has to offer. Sometimes they accuse you of being lazy. At other times they will call you victimized.

However, we must warn them of the coming judgment upon those who chase worldly fantasies and persecute those who pursue God.

SLIDE 7 *"⁵ They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. ⁶ For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit."*

The gospel not only effects those who are crying out for God, it effects those who are opposed to the Lord. They are the walking "dead." They refuse to come to the Lord so that they might have life. Therefore what produces life in us produces death in those who are dead. Like Jesus said, *"Let the dead bury their own dead."* (Luke 9:60)

SLIDE 8 *"⁷ But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. ⁸ And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins." ⁹ Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰ As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God"*

Verse 7 in the NIV states, "The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and sober minded so you can pray." I have posted on the wall of the Prayer Tower.

Next, hospitality is a big thing in Christian circles. It also provides a great opportunity for those outside the faith to see the way Christians live in everyday life. (v. 9)

Finally in verse 9, being a good steward of God's grace means we need to develop and use the gifts God has given us to minister to others.

Next Peter talks about speaking and ministering:

SLIDE 9 *"¹¹ If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles [i.e.: a message from God] of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen."*

Peter calls our attention to how important it is to speak what God says about every situation, rather than our own opinions or knowledge gleaned from the world.

This implies not only speaking the Word of God, but speaking it with authority.

Then Peter continues to re-emphasize the importance of understanding trials, tribulations, and persecutions.

SLIDE 10 *"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."*

Peter calls suffering "partaking." We share in the suffering of our Lord when we bear up under persecution and defamation for him. Choosing to do right will not always

result in the accolades we often seek.

SLIDE 11 *"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."*

Suffering for the sake of Christ blesses you and glorifies the Lord. Let's not ruin this with our mouths by slandering others for what they do. Focus on what we do in return.

Peter then moves from suffering for the Lord to the judgment of the Lord:

SLIDE 12 *"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?"*

In verse 18 Peter is most likely alluding to Proverbs 11:31, where it says, "If the righteous receive their due on earth, how much more the ungodly and the sinner!"

Peter closes this chapter in the same way he opens it, with a "therefore."

SLIDE 13 *"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."*

If we are called to suffer for his name then we should have the same attitude that Peter and the other Apostles did when the Sanhedrin beat them without a trial and released them.

SLIDE 14 Acts 5:41 (NIV) *"The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because **they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.**"*

SLIDE 15 Altar Time

It is evident that God has called us to suffering, submissions, and service. Yes, there are those called to confront opposition, but that's probably not you.