



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond

V26 N21

May 26, 2024

HIGHER UP

“A Manual for Suffering”

1 Peter 4:12-19

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Faithfulness

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

“Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.”

Proverbs 3:3-4



How should Christians respond to suffering?

Peter challenges his readers to remain faithful in the face of suffering. He concludes his thoughts on the subject with these words: “So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their *faithful* Creator and *continue to do good*” (1Pe 4:19). God is faithful; we are to be faithful, too.

Paul provides us with the consummate example of someone who remained faithful in spite of what he suffered, namely, *persecution* compounded by *privation*. He describes what he went through for the sake of the gospel in 2 Corinthians 11:23-28. Alluding to his detractors, he begins: “Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.”

Why did he do it? You ask. He answers that question in 2 Timothy 2:8-10. From prison, he writes: “Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, for which I am suf-

fering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God’s word is not chained. *Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.*”

Of course, Christians in general will not face the persecution and hardship that Paul faced, but that’s not the point. The point is he remained faithful to Christ and his calling through it all. If he could do that through suffering *greater* than ours, we should remain faithful through suffering *lesser* than his.

Peter provides us with an example of someone who learned to be faithful the hard way. Ironically, *on the one hand*, his fear of suffering caused him to be unfaithful during Christ’s trial. After Jesus tells his disciples “You will all fall away,” Peter confidently declares, “Even if all fall away, I will not” (Mk 14:29). But when he is identified as one of Jesus’ disciples by a servant girl, twice he denies it, and then is identified by a loitering crowd, “He began to call down curses, and he swear to them, ‘I don’t know this man you’re talking about’” (v. 71). Mark tells us: “Immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: ‘Before the rooster crows twice you will disown me three times.’ And he broke down and wept” (v. 72). But that isn’t the end of the story. John tells us that following his resurrection, Jesus appeared to the disciples and restored Peter (Jn 21:15-19).

On the other hand, Peter challenges the readers of his first epistle *not to fear* their “fiery ordeal” (4:12) but to face it with rejoicing and to “continue to do good” (v. 19).



1 EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

Read 1 Peter 4:12-19

12 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. 13 But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. 14 If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 15 If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. 16 However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. 17 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? 18 And,

*"If it is hard for the righteous to be saved,
what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"*

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

Read in another translation

12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. 14 If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. 16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. 17 For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 And

*"If the righteous is scarcely saved,
what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"*

19 Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good. (ESV)

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle "Dear friends" in v. 12.
- Circle "fiery ordeal" in v. 12.
- Circle "test" in v. 12.
- Box "But" indicating *contrast* in vv. 13, 16.
- Circle "rejoice" in v. 13.
- Bracket "participate in the sufferings of Christ" in v. 13.
- Box "so that" indicating *result* in v. 13.
- Circle "glory" in v. 13.
- Circle "insulted" in v. 14.
- Box "for" indicating *reason* in v. 14.
- Bracket "of glory" and "of God" in v. 14.
- Circle "rests" in v. 14.
- Box "However" indicating *contrast* in v. 16.
- Bracket "that you bear that name" in v. 16.
- Circle "judgment" in v. 17.
- Box "So then" indicating *result* in v. 19.
- Circle "commit" in v. 19.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. A “fiery ordeal has come on” Peter’s readers. To *what* does “fiery ordeal” refer?
 2. The “fiery ordeal has come on” them for *what purpose*?
 3. Explain the *contrast* introduced in verse 13.
 4. Explain *why* what is happening to them should be a *reason* to rejoice (v. 13).
 5. Describe *what results* from participating in the sufferings of Christ (v. 13).
 6. Christians who are “*insulted* because of the name of Christ” (v. 14) are *blessed*. How so?
 7. Explain the *contrast* in verse 16.
 8. Explain the *difference* between “judgment” on “God’s household” and judgment on “those who do not obey the gospel of God.”
 9. So what are those who suffer as Christians to do?
 10. **Discussion:** Talk about the relevance of Peter’s words to believers who for the most part are not suffering as Christians.
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Commentary On The Text

One commentator provides a helpful overview of 1 Peter, putting 4:12-19 in its context. He writes: "Peter has sketched the glories and implications of salvation (1:3-2:10) and spelled out how Christians are to live honorably within the context of a hostile society (2:11-4:11); he now turns to his final concerns. The major theme of 4:12-5:11 revolves around exhortations based on the life *within* the church. Peter speaks here again about how to cope with suffering, but this time adds a note of urgency. He then addresses the leaders of the churches (5:1-9) and concludes with a doxology (5:10-11)" (Scot McKnight, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 Peter*, 247). Although verses 12-19 are one paragraph in the NIV, a distinct grouping of them is possible. Verses 12 and 13 together contain a contrast. Verses 14-16 all open with conditional clauses. Verses 17 and 18 pertain to judgment, verse 18 confirming Peter's statement in verse 17. And verse 19, which begins "So then," introduces a fitting conclusion to the paragraph.

In verses 12 and 13, Peter tells his readers rather than *be surprised* by the harsh treatment they are experiencing, instead they *should rejoice*. His use of "fiery ordeal" to refer to their suffering together with the word "trial," indicating its *purpose*, suggests that God is using their hardship to refine their faith in the same way fire is used to refine metal. They are to rejoice in as much as they are suffering like Jesus suffered, and if they suffer like he suffered, namely, for doing right, they will share in his glory when he returns. According to Peter, suffering as a Christian is nothing out of the ordinary but is to be expected.

Verses 14, 15, and 16 all contain *conditional* clauses, clauses beginning with "if," assumed to be true. According to the *first* clause (v. 14), those who are insulted as Christians are blessed, because even though they may be ostracized from society for their faith, they enjoy the *presence* of the Holy Spirit. The verse alludes to Isaiah 11:2, the text Jesus claimed to be fulfilled in himself (Lk 4:18). One commentator writes: "Peter boldly applied the same prophecy to Christians, but with a significant amplification. The Spirit is **the Spirit of glory**, literally **of** the glory, which almost certainly is an allusion to the *Shekinah*, the glory cloud signifying the divine presence (Exod. 40:34-35; 1 Kings 8:11; Matt. 17:5)" (Norman Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, NIBC, 131-32). The *third* clause (v. 16), echoes the first. Suffering as a Christian is no cause for shame. It's actually a cause for praise that you are a Christian (NIV) or a cause to glorify God as

a Christian (ESV). The *second* clause, sandwiched in between (v. 15), contains a caveat. Those who suffer for doing wrong will not enjoy the presence of the Spirit, neither will they have reason to praise or glorify God.

Verses 17 and 18 are the most difficult to clearly understand. However, Peter's point seems to be that divine judgment is inescapable. Both believers, "God's household," and unbelievers, "those who do not obey the gospel of God," will be judged. But the *purpose* and *severity* of the two judgments will be very different. Believers are *disciplined* for the sake of their sanctification and their reward. Unbelievers are *punished* for their wickedness. And while no kind of judgment is easy, judgment on unbelievers will be much harder. Put differently, "If God brings judgment on his own people, how much more serious will the judgment be that he will bring on unbelievers!" (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on 1Pe 4:17).

The commentator above summarizes the sense of Proverbs 11:31, the verse Peter uses to confirm his point. "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved . . ." does not, of course, imply that it is difficult for God to save, or that there is any uncertainty about the destiny of believers. The words mean that the believer must not expect the road to ultimate full salvation to be uneventfully smooth and easy. Spiritual adversaries will see to that, quite apart from the common ills to which anyone living in this world may be subject. But if it is far from roses all the way for the godly, the quotation goes on with the rhetorical question '**what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?**' What indeed! The outlook for one who acts contemptuously toward God (such is the implication of the word for **ungodly**: impious) is left hanging threateningly in the air" (Hillyer, 133-34).

Verse 19 answers the question: What are those who suffer according to God's will to do? Peter's answer: They are to commit themselves to their faithful Creator like one deposits money to a bank for safekeeping. And they are to continue to do what is right. "The combination of 'faithful' and 'Creator' reminds the believer of God's love and power in the midst of trials so that they will not doubt his interest or ability. The continuation in good works or action is a concrete sign of the faith that is the essence of being a Christ (cf. 2:15, 20; 3:6, 17)" (Edwin A. Blum, "1 Peter," in *The Bible Expositor's Commentary*, vol. 12, 249).

Word Studies/Notes

v. 12 *Dear Friends* Cf. 2:11. “**Dear friends** signals the beginning of a new section, as Peter returns to the subject of suffering, though in particular to suffering on account of being a Christian” (Norman Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, NIBC, 130).

v. 12 *fiery ordeal* “Their persecutions were ‘fiery’ ordeals in the sense that they were part of God’s refining process and were uncomfortable (cf. 2:11)” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on 1 Peter,” 2024 ed., 98, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1peter.pdf). “Peter probably has in mind the use of the word in Proverbs 27:21 (LXX), ‘Fire is the means of testing silver and gold.’ Because of this sense, the word could also be translated ‘refining fire’. The imagery is similar to that used in 1:7. The image of a refiner’s fire suggests that such suffering purifies and strengthens Christians” (Wayne Grudem, *1 Peter*, TNTC, 178).

v. 12 *test* “‘Trial’ denotes an experience that is either positive (God is testing you; cf. 1:6-7) or negative (it is a painful experience or an occasion for temptation). While the latter may be true, the primary sense is surely to be found in the former” (Scot McKnight, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 Peter*, 248). “It was for their ‘testing’ (Gr. *pairasmos*, proving), to manifest their faith, that God allowed their sufferings (cf. James 1:2-4)” (Constable, 98).

v. 13 *rejoice* “For illustrations of Christians’ rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the name of Christ, see Acts 5:41 (all of the apostles) and Acts 16:22-25 (of Paul and Silas)” (Edwin A. Blum, “1 Peter,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 12, 248).

v. 13 *participate in . . .* “What happened to him is happening to them” (Hillyer, 130). “We Christians can also ‘rejoice and be overjoyed’ in these sufferings because, when we experience them, we ‘share’ in Christ’s sufferings. That is, *we experience what Jesus did during His time on earth* as He continued faithful to God’s will” (Constable, 98, italics added).

v. 13 *glory* “Christian rejoicing rests on the fact that as Christians share in Christ’s suffering, so they will share in his glory with great joy. The prospect of Christ’s full manifestation in all his glory fills the believer with joy and comfort” (Blum, 248). “The ‘revelation’ (uncovering, Gr. *apokalypsis*) of Jesus Christ’s ‘glory’ is most likely a general reference to Christ’s appearing without distinction between the Rapture and the Second Coming (cf. 1:7, 13). At both of these events His glory will become manifest, first to the church at the Rapture, and then to the world at His Second Coming” (Constable, 98).

v. 14 *insulted* “Many social and civic activities of the day involved pagan practices in which Christians could not in conscience take part (4:4). This led not merely to misunderstanding and resentment by uncomprehending

pagan neighbors; it could readily be interpreted as antisocial at best or treasonable at worst” (Hillyer, 131). “Because the first-century Mediterranean society was an honor-shame culture, an ‘insult’ was much more than a form of criticism. Criticisms can be deflected; being shamed, however, irreparably damages one’s social standing . . . What these Christians must learn to cope with is the loss of social standing involved with conversion and consistent Christian living (though this does not imply they were previously in the upper class)” (McKnight, 250). “To be insulted is not simply to receive a rebuke (2:12; 3:16; 4:5), but . . . it means to be rejected by the society (or even by humanity)” (Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, NICNT, 167).

v. 14 *of glory, of God* A reference to the Holy Spirit. “**The Spirit of glory and of God** may be an example of hendiadys [i.e., a figure of speech expressing a single idea using two words connected by “and”], and so be translated ‘the glorious divine Spirit.’ On the literary figure of hendiadys, see Additional Note on 2:25” (Hillyer, 135). Or “The ‘and’ here (Gr. *kai*) may be ascensive, meaning ‘even’: ‘the Spirit of glory, even God’s Spirit’” (Constable, 99).

v. 14 *rests* Cf. Isa 11:2. “Peter sees this Messianic blessing extending also to those who bear the name of the Messiah (or ‘Christ’)—see some examples in Acts 5:41; 6:15; 7:55, 59-60; 16:25. Yet the word *glory* in the verse suggest another theme as well: the New Testament fulfillment of the Old Testament cloud of God’s glory (the ‘shekinah glory’) is to be seen in the powerful dwelling of the Holy spirit within Christian believers” (Grudem, 180).

v. 16 *bear that name* Cf. “let him glorify God *in that name*” (ESV), i.e., the name “Christian.” ESV paraphrased, “let him glorify God as a Christian” (see Grudem, 180-81), rather than NIV paraphrased, “praise God that you are a Christian.”

v. 17 *judgment* “God allows persecutions as disciplinary judgment to purify the lives of those in **the family of God**. If believers need disciplinary earthly judgments (**if it beings with us**, a first-class condition which assumes the reality of the premise), how much more will **those who do not obey the gospel** (cf. 2:7) **the ungodly and the sinner**, deserve everlasting judgment?” (Roger M. Raymer, “1 Peter,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 855).

v. 19 *commit* “The Greek verb in **commit themselves** means ‘to make a deposit,’ as in the safe-keeping of a bank. The same Greek verb is used of Jesus on the cross committing his spirit to his Father (Luke 23:46)” (Hillyer, 137). Peter spoke from experience (see Ac 12:6).

4

APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Rather than be surprised by suffering intended to test you, instead rejoice, for if you share in Christ's sufferings you are blessed to share in his glory, so entrust yourself to God and continue to do what is right.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The "Living Questions" are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

For the past several months we've been studying the book of 1 Peter, and we've been able to recognize a fairly consistent theme woven throughout. As followers of Christ living as strangers in this world, we will suffer for His name. In this suffering, we should not only persevere but rejoice as we align with Jesus in the present and look forward with hope to the glory that is to come. Think for a moment about times you've suffered in this way. Now, imagine your child suffering in the same way for their belief. I remember losing friends and being the target of gossip because I chose to say no to the world and yes to Jesus. It was painful! About the same time, one of my boys experienced something similar. He has always been very sensitive to others cussing around him, and I remember he would tell me stories of yelling, "Language!" when his sixth-grade buds were trying new sentence enhancers. He was actively made fun of with a few extra choice words thrown in just to goad him. He began to see a fracture in his friend group as he chose to walk more closely with the Lord. It was hard to watch my child navigate this experience, but because I had recently walked the same road, I recognized that his pain was as strong and raw as my own. I think sometimes we diminish the feelings of our children because of their age. Let me encourage you to be sensitive and supportive because what they're experiencing is as true and real as what you're going through. We're praying for you!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read 1 Peter 4:12-19

1. Instead of being surprised at suffering, what should we do?
2. When insulted because of our faith, what does Peter say we really are?
3. Instead of being ashamed for suffering because of our faith, what should we do?

What Do You Think?

Is it hard to continue doing good in times of suffering or trouble?

What Do You Do?

What is something that you're committed to right now (soccer, grades, art)? What habits help you stay committed? What habits might help you stay committed to God? For 15 minutes each day, commit to reading your Bible or praying. What do you learn about God?

CORE COMPETENCY: Faithfulness

I am loyal to God and others so they know they can count on me.

MEMORY VERSE: Ephesians 3:20-21

"Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be the glory."

KidPIXCOUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- I completed my Bible Study
- I memorized this week's verse
- I brought my Bible to church
- I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have five children: Elijah, Levi, Bo, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

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