

1 Peter 4 Notes

Suffering Christians Should Remember Their Example Before Men (2:11-4:6)

- The purpose of suffering for righteousness (4:1-6).
 - Christ proved that suffering can lead to victory over evil. Therefore, we need to “arm” ourselves. “Arm” means a preparation for battle. When someone becomes dead in a moral sense, they are expected to cease from sin. Sin is disobedience to God; therefore, if someone puts away sin, they will live according to the “will of God.”
 - “Lusts” is a strong word that means “passionate longing,” and in this context denotes an evil desire. The recipients of the letter were formerly pagans. Their desire (“purposed longing”) was for unbridled, unrestrained vice, and Peter makes this clear with the use of six terms. Three of them related to drinking. He condemns “excess of wine,” “revellings,” and “banquetings.” Peter made a specific reference to three levels of drinking and condemned all of them!
 - “Excess of riot” is described as “a euphoric stampede of pleasure seekers.” Their mind is so corrupt that all they think of is how they might indulge their sinful passions. Christians are supported in their stand against the ungodly life by the fact of the coming judgment.
 - Vs. 6 has many varying interpretation, just like 3:18-19. The context best supports the fact that the dead are Christians, who had the gospel preached to them and who then died (or were put to death). The condemnation inflicted on them was by their fellowmen who were unbelievers. However, after suffering, they have life from God in their spirit which cannot be touched by their persecutors.

Suffering Christians Should Remember Their Lord Will Return (4:7-5:11)

- The responsibilities of Christ living (4:7-11).
 - The end of the world is “approaching” (“near”), and we should act accordingly (Acts 2:17; 2 Timothy 3:1; Hebrews 1:2; 1 John 2:18). Christ is definitely coming again; it could occur at any time. If Christians knew when Christ was coming again, they could lose motivation and become apathetic, or if they knew it was near, engage in frenzied, panicked activity as the day approached. The Bible never demands overzealous extremism when it comes to the end of time.
 - Peter stresses the extreme importance of love. “Fervent” denotes stretching or straining, or exerting maximum effort. This kind of love is sacrificial, not sentimental. Love covering a multitude of sins does

not mean that we ignore sin, but that we lovingly overlook sin once repentance has taken place.

- The command to be hospitable moves beyond the circle of Christians and extends to everyone. It includes an unselfish attitude as well; it is to be done without complaint.
- Although Peter may have been speaking of spiritual gifts in vss. 10-11, the principles can still be used now. We are still stewards of the manifold grace of God and we still need to speaking according to the "oracles of God." If someone does not use their talents, it strains the local church because it must either do without or someone must really strive to overcome the deficiency.
- The reality of Christian suffering (4:12-19).
 - Peter likely wrote this epistle just before Nero's persecution began. It appears as if the Christians Peter wrote to were not expecting their trials (cf. John 15:18; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 John 3:13). They were not to be shocked or surprised.
 - "Fiery ordeal" is a figurative expression for the painful experience of persecution. Suffering will reveal one's faithfulness to the Lord. We share in the sufferings of the Lord because He endured or suffering for what is right. The "name of Christ" has been the cause of hatred directed toward Christians (Acts 4:12; 5:41; 9:16).
 - Trouble stemming from lawless actions does not equal suffering for righteousness. The term for "busybody" only occurs here in the New Testament, and it refers to one who is a troublemaker or agitator in society or in their places of work. A Christian is not to suffer for political activism or civil agitation -- that is not suffering for the sake of righteousness. If we suffer righteously, we ought to praise God for the privilege and honor of suffering.
 - A lot of misunderstanding has surrounded vss. 17-18. Peter explains that if the judgment commences from the house of God in relation to their enemies, then the ungodly and sinners cannot look to a good end. The preposition "at" is best translated "from." The meaning of the preposition makes a big difference in the sense of what Peter is saying. God's judgment or verdict begins from His house or His church.
 - Those who do not obey the gospel will receive a verdict opposite the one the people of God received. They have no chance; therefore, the necessity for God's people to suffer for being Christians and not for being sinners.
 - Persecution puts God's people in a very difficult situation; the righteous have a difficult time. If one of God's children has to endure such persecution, and has difficulty undergoing this kind of treatment and

judgment of sinners, then the one who rejects God certainly will not have a good outcome.

- The word "commit" is a banker's term referring to a deposit for safe-keeping. Jesus used the same word on the cross when He committed His spirit to His Father (Luke 23:46). God is described as a "faithful Creator," and who could be better than the trustworthy Creator who always acts righteously? We can always confide in Him, especially during our times of suffering.