

Intro: One of the most difficult issues of life...Christian or non-Christian, is the issue of suffering.

*“Why do awful things happen in our world? Why do children get sick? Why do elderly suffer with health?
Why do we work hard and still lose our job? Why do unimaginable accidents happen?”*

For thousands of years, religious and nonreligious people alike have tried to come to grips with the problem of suffering.

I don't claim to have “the answer” to suffering this morning. But Peter gives us some PERSPECTIVE!

1 Peter 4:12-19 Pg 859

1. Don't Be Surprised When Suffering Comes, In Fact Expect It! 4:12

The first thing Peter tells us is, don't think it is strange or unusual or unexpected when suffering comes.

- ~Surprised: Lit = *to be Strange or Alien, unusual*
- ~Painful: Lit = *Fiery trial, burning*
- ~Happens: Lit = *Walks along with you!*

Don't think something unusual is happening when suffering comes and walks with you! (Don't be caught off guard)

For followers of Jesus, Suffering is a part of life in this world. In fact, Peter is simply saying the same thing Jesus told us!

Bible Tells us we suffer trials for MANY different reasons...Let me give you just 4

5 Reasons for Suffering

- For Doing wrong 4:15
- We live in a fallen world Gen 3 Why did God do this? He didn't! WE did They...and We...want life w/o God's rule...Got it Illus: *Just past week...“Problem is heart of man”*
- We have an enemy that wants to destroy us. 1 Peter 5:8 “Roaring lion” “Steal, Kill, Destroy” John 10:10
- When we identify with Jesus, we suffer persecution 4:13, 16 Jesus told us to expect that! John 15:18-21
- God is purifying us James 1:2-4; Psalm 66:10-12 (Used in Septuagint)

Peter tells us, “Listen, suffering has been with us ever since the very first sin in the Garden of Eden. It will never go away as long as we live in this world. Until Christ returns, and Satan is bound, and we are delivered from this world to the next, suffering is a part of what we have to live with. It is going to “walk along with us!” So, don't be surprised, Caught off Guard!

The second thing Peter tells us is that while we cannot avoid suffering in this world, you can...

2. Choose WHY You Suffer! 3:17

Suffering is unavoidable in a fallen world that is ruled by the Evil one and filled with fallen men. It IS going to happen.

But, that said, we can choose WHY we suffer...As a follower of Jesus we need to be suffering for the Right Reasons!

Peter is saying to us, Be sure that you aren't CREATING the trouble you have by doing wrong, evil, breaking the law!

There is going to be enough that comes your way for doing the RIGHT things...Don't add more to it by doing the WRONG!!!

- Be a “Good Doer, and not a Bad Doer!” 3:17
- As A Christian: Lit = “for being a Christian” 4:12-16
Christian: 1 of only 3 times used in the NT
~Kaisarianos: Worshipper of Caesar (State religion of Rome) Bound them all together
~Christianos: Worshipper of the Christ (Seen as “competition” to the state religion, rebellion and anarchy)
Illus: *Polycarp Bishop of Smyrna mid second century Away with atheists Respect for age*
- Doing Evil Lit = “for being a bad-doer!” 4:15
4:15: Murderer, Thief, Criminal or Meddler

Peter says to us...Listen. Suffering is a part of this world, and it comes for ALL different kinds of reasons
You cannot choose IF you will suffer...It WILL walk along with you! But, you can choose WHY you suffer

The third thing Peter teaches us about suffering is to:

3. Look For The Positive Spiritual Results of Suffering In Your Life. 3:18ff; 4:16-19

While we don't LIKE it, God often uses the struggles of life, trials, tribulations, fires and struggles for spiritual development
He does many different things, Peter mentions just a few of them.

6 Positive Spiritual Results of Suffering

- Makes you obedient to the Father: 3:17, “Better if it is the will of God” “If this cup can pass from me”
- Sometimes It Blesses Others 3:18 “Christ died for sins, once for all to bring us to God!”
There was NOTHING in the Cross for Jesus!
Sometimes God allows that kind of work through us as well! (Phil 3:10 Know him, power, suffering)
- Helps you glorify the Father. 4:13, 14 “Glory is Revealed” “Spirit of Glory rests on you!”
There are times in suffering when the Glory of God is “Revealed” lit = *His glory “comes to light” or is unveiled*
There are times in suffering when His Spirit RESTS on you! Lit = *like the shekinah glory on tabernacle*

