

1 Peter – Week 22

Faith and Furnaces

1 Peter 4:12 Beloved, do not be amazed and bewildered at the fiery ordeal which is taking place to test your quality, as though something strange were befalling you. 13 But insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, rejoice, so that when His glory [full of radiance and splendor] is revealed, you may also rejoice with triumph. 14 If you are censured and suffer abuse [because you bear] the name of Christ, blessed [are you--happy, fortunate, to be envied, with life-joy, and satisfaction in God's favor and salvation, regardless of your outward condition], because the Spirit of glory, the Spirit of God, is resting upon you. (On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. [Isa 11:2.] 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or any sort of criminal, or as a mischief-maker (a meddler) in the affairs of others [infringing on their rights]. 16 But if [one is ill-treated and suffers] as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but give glory to God that he is [deemed worthy to suffer] in this name. 17 For the time [has arrived] for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will [be] the end of those who do not respect or believe or obey the good news (the Gospel) of God? 18 And if the righteous are barely saved, what will become of the godless and wicked? [Prov 11:31.] 19 Therefore, those who are ill-treated and suffer in accordance with God's will must do right and commit their souls [in charge as a deposit] to the one who created [them] and will never fail [them].

- Peter is telling us not to be SURPRISED by painful trials or suffering as though it was strange that it's happening to me.

Trials have a purpose for Christians

1. The purpose of trials is to prove our FAITH and HEARTS.
 - Testing a believer is not the same thing as DISCIPLINING a believer.
 - For them, the trials were a good thing that resulted in GLORIFYING God.
 - The Christian product to serve in spite of trials is not just a product of faith but also of EXPERIENCE.
 - We have something to fall back on---the MERCY of God.
2. The purpose of trials is to bring us in LINE with Christ.
 - The experiences of life are what our faith can be built on as we learn OBEDIENCE.
 - Victory over LIFE cannot be gained apart from learning the ways of Christ.
3. The purpose of trials is to express to the world the special GRACE God gives us.

- The Spirit of God has a DESIGN on your life.
 - The Spirit of God is really CONCERNED about the things in your life.
4. The purpose of trials is part of the divine JUDGEMENT on our world.
 - We are to be ministers of God's divine mercy that always BLENDS mercy with God's judgment.
 - The suffering of Christ should SHARPEN our perception about the heart of God and the assignment He has given us on earth.
 5. The purpose of trials is to bring us to a place of continual SELF-EXAMINATION.
 - Peter is telling us that if you suffer, don't let it be because you've committed a crime or done something that bothers GOD.
 6. Knowing the right answer to trials does not mean you will HANDLE it well.
 - When our prayer life is CONFUSED, the mind will be confused.
 - The upright need not get UPTIGHT.
 - We must put our whole heart and effort into ENDURING the trials of life or the people who make life hard.
 - Our FAITH walk is dependent on what we really believe about God turning all the junk to good.
 7. We must consider the MILDNESS of our trials compared to what the lost face.
 - We must see our lives as a DEPOSIT that we lay into the hands of God as we wait on God's direction.

Final thoughts:

Suffering and the trials of life will sharpen our perceptions about three things

1. The WORD of God.
2. The WORKS of God.
3. The WORSHIP of God.
This worship is PERSONAL. It's positional. (to Him be the glory) It's perpetual (for ever and ever) Amen. So be it.
4. Remain GRATEFUL even when it's hard.