

Women's Bible Study  
1Peter 4:12-13, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
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Review Peter's words to the church in 1Peter 4:1-11.

- Looking to Christ's example, have the same purpose (v.1)
- Live for God's will (v.2)
- Put off the desires of the world (v.3-5)
- Keep your focus on Jesus (v.6)
- Use discernment in your decisions and pray (v.7)
- Fervently love one another, encouraging one another (v.8)
- Show hospitality to one another without grumbling (v.9)
- Serve with whatever gifts and strengths you have (v.10)
- Be careful to speak Truth, serve in God's strength for His glory (v.11)

The next two verses in 1Peter 4 give us instruction on what not to do and what we should do – ***Do not be surprised*** and ***Keep on rejoicing***. We should not be surprised that our faith is tested; we should rejoice that our faith is tangible.

1Peter 4:12-13 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.

***How do you most often respond to trouble? According to the scripture above, how should you respond to trouble?***

Much of the time we *are* surprised with a sudden development of trouble. We go along with our day, fulfilling our responsibilities, and then the bottom drops out of the box! At this point we either take a deep breath and look to our Savior's strength, or we hyperventilate and run around in a frenzy wondering what we are supposed to do. Our entire focus can change very quickly. It is easy to live for God's will, keep our eyes on Jesus, be steadfast in our love for one another and serve in God's strength, when the sun is shining! When the storms come, when we are challenged, when circumstances take a turn for the worse, we forget our purpose.

The Apostles' warning to the church and to us – expect trials! Be prepared to respond well, knowing that your testing will grow discipline in your life. Trials allow God's children to understand in a small way, what Christ did for us. Growing in our likeness of Jesus is painful; our testing can affect every fiber in our body and mind, yet our soul should be filled with joy that we are in the process of being transformed.

***Beloved.*** Notice how the Apostle addresses his brothers and sisters in Christ. This is a term of endearment. He includes himself with them in his exhortation to act with patience and integrity under persecution. When our brothers and sisters in Christ are in the midst of difficult circumstances, we should come alongside them. The Apostle

understands the difficulties and struggles these believers are facing. Being reminded of our purpose gives us hope. Knowing we are in this together gives us courage.

Using the term *beloved* highlights the Apostle's relationship with these believers. Beloved is a word of kindness and inclusion. This brings to my mind two things. First, the description of love's characteristics in 1Corinthians 13; second, that this exhortation relates to all those who follow Christ. Peter is not without the same struggles and testing of those he is addressing.

1Corinthians 13:4 Love is patient, **love is kind** and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant,

The kindness spoken of in 1Corinthians 13 is motivated by sympathy and understanding. It desires others to benefit. Peter is not scolding, neither is he being critical; he is showing an honest concern for the troubles his peers are facing. He is holding out an understanding hand. The Apostle places himself with them, not above.

Think of Jesus' example. He came to earth as man, willingly choosing to lay aside His deity. He was still God but chose to interact as man not excluding Himself from the same troubles and temptations. He felt pain, sorrow, frustration, and abandonment.

Philippians 2:7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

Isaiah 53:3 He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

Jesus understands our struggles. The Apostle Peter was shown this very example by Christ Himself. In Matthew 14:31, Jesus took hold of Peter's hand when he began sinking while walking on the water. Jesus indeed rebuked Peter for his lack of faith, but He also held him up and walked with him; He did not just leave him sinking on his own.

**Think! Do you come alongside others to encourage them, or do you hold yourself distant? Are you seeking to get from others or to give to others?** There is a term called a "fair-weather friend". This description is of someone who is by your side until trouble hits, then they are nowhere to be found! Remember the several accounts of the disciples who kept themselves scarce while Jesus was arrested?

Matthew 26:56 "But all this has taken place to fulfill the Scriptures of the prophets." Then all the disciples left Him and fled. (Also vs. 69→)

**Surprised.** Literally, think it *not* strange. We are to expect trouble! It was not unusual for those who followed God to be persecuted then, and it is not unusual now. We are extremely blessed to have freedoms in our Country which allow our faith to be practiced and proclaimed. At this point in history, we do not suffer any real persecution for our faith, yet the world and its offerings provide plenty of temptations that draw us away. When things are going well, it may be easy for us to forget we

are in a battle with sin. As a result, we are surprised when difficulties unfold even though we are told to expect problems. When we expect something to happen, we prepare in advance. So, for myself, when I am caught off guard with a difficult circumstance, it is a lack of remembering I am in a fight and a lack of preparing my heart each day and moment with the armor needed for the fight. **Think! How do you prepare for potential problems?** We think it wise to prepare for all sorts of catastrophic events – we know they will happen; we just don't know when. Likewise, we are to expect trouble because of our faith – we are to be prepared for spiritual attack, so we are not caught off guard. This truth calls for action on our part. We are to think ahead how we will respond in holiness when our faith is tested.

*Fiery ordeal.* Calamities or trials. This is the picture of something igniting a problem, referring to a severe trial. Liken this to the fire used to test metals removing their impurities. 'Fiery ordeals' relates to persecution as a direct result of faith in Christ.

2Timothy 3:12 Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

Matthew 16:24-25 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

Acts 14:22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."

*Testing.* Putting to proof by experiment, experience, discipline, or provocation; adversity; temptation. In this context, it means to try one's faith for its quality.

**Think! What do you do when you test something? Why are things tested?**

1Corinthians 3:12-13 Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work.

1Peter 1:6-7 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

**Consider.** As a believer, you have been saved from God's wrath. You are in the process of being sanctified – being rid of impurities – in order to be presented pure and spotless. **Accordingly, should testing come as a surprise?**

Colossians 1:21-22 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach-

When we look at verse 13 of 1Peter 4, we are reminded that our focus is to be on the hope we have for our future. Even in the midst of suffering and persecution, Peter is guiding the church's thoughts to their purpose in Christ. If we look to the example of Jesus, we will expect trials, or the testing of our faith. **Think! If we have never been**

***challenged to remain steadfast through difficulties, we might need to examine our sincerity in Christ – are we truly saved? Are you being transformed?***

Matthew 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.

Today, we look at the cross and are reminded of the power of Christ over sin and death. In biblical times, especially in the Roman empire, the cross was a symbol of certain death by crucifixion. The words in the above verse are more than just accepting hardship, they are a statement of *denying oneself for the purpose of Christ*. ***Are we willing to die to ourselves in order to follow His Truths? What might this look like in your circumstances?***

The struggles, difficulties, challenges, and testing, of our faith does not occur haphazardly. They are purposed by God in order to grow us in our understanding and likeness of Jesus. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that we encounter trouble. We can easily separate ourselves from the saints of old, thinking that was then, this is now. However, the need for salvation through Jesus' death and resurrection is the same today as it was almost 2,000 years ago. People are still prideful, living for self, focused on their own glory, rather than obedience to God. Sin is still present and persuades us to its offerings. The testimonies we have of Christian persecution is real – if it happened then, it will happen now.

Regard the difference between testing and destroying. We are not afflicted in order to be wiped out. We are tested in order to examine the character of our faith; to determine its strength to stand firm; to prove its truth and genuineness in our heart.

1Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

What does it mean to 'share the sufferings of Christ'? Everyone on earth suffers in one way or another at one time or another. But, suffering and 'sharing the sufferings of Christ' are different. The latter produces hope where the former has no hope at all. Sharing in the sufferings of Christ confirms our relationship with Him, our righteousness only found in Him, and our future resurrection from the dead, both body and soul restored in His likeness for eternity. The suffering we experience in this world is temporary; in God's strength and guidance of His Holy Spirit, we can hang on while we look to our eternal future in heaven.

Philippians 3:8-11 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings,

being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Romans 8:16-17 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

John 15:20 "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.

Matthew 5:10-12 "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Peter urges the church to [keep on rejoicing](#). Not for the trouble itself, but for the opportunity to prove that their faith was real, and for the assurance given them for their future. The joy experienced here may be mixed with pain and heaviness but one day will be pure elation. In the event we are chastised or ridiculed, overlooked, or even mistreated because of our stand for Jesus, we should respond with joy that we are indeed followers of Christ and are not conformed to this world.

***Think! Are you willing to take a stand for Christ? When you are ostracized for your beliefs, are you still able to rejoice in the Truths you know?***

Go back to 1Peter 1:6 and circle the word rejoice. Do the same for Matthew 5:12.

Luke 6:22-23 "Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. "Be glad in that day and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven. For in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets.

Acts 5:41 So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name. (This is after Peter and the apostles were accused and flogged for teaching about Jesus. Flogging or scourging was a usual punishment in the Roman empire. Typically, the accused were stripped of clothing then tied to a frame and beaten with rods.)

Acts 16:25 But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them;

Romans 8:17-18 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

Romans 5:3-4 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;

2Corinthians 4:17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,

James 1:2-4 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

*“That I may know Him. That I may be fully acquainted with His nature, His character, His work, and with the salvation which He has wrought out. It is one of the highest objects of desire in the mind of the Christian to know Christ. ... And the power of His resurrection. That is, that I may understand and experience the proper influence which the fact of His resurrection should have on the mind. That influence would be felt in imparting the hope of immortality; in sustaining the soul in the prospect of death, by the expectation of being raised from the grave in like manner; and in raising the mind above the world. ... One of the things which a Christian ought most earnestly to desire is, to feel the power of this truth on his soul – that His great Redeemer has burst the bands of death; has brought life and immortality to light, and has given us the pledge that our bodies shall rise.”*  
Albert Barnes' NT Commentary

Philippians 3:10-12 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

Lastly, the purpose or result of your rejoicing is **that at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation**. This is exceeding joy, then you shall exult. Think extreme elation, triumph!

1Peter 1:8 speaks of *Joy inexpressible and full of glory* in our response to the salvation of our souls and the love we have for Christ.

God's glory revealed! Imagine. Truly, we are unable to conceive of the joy awaiting us.

We are here, on this earth, for the testimony of Jesus Christ. We have been given the privilege to stand for Him now, and in eternity we will bow before His throne of grace.

*“By such exhortations as these the heroes of the cross were trained to endurance, so that they defied death, and torments worse than death. Have we any of their brave spirit?”* Spurgeon Devotional Commentary.

1Peter 1:13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 25:21;34 "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' ... "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

2Corinthians 4:8-18