

Led by the Spirit - Part 5

SUFFERING

1Peter 4:19-5:11

STIMULATE

** In our study together last week, we looked at the expressed will of God for all Christians to be **Submissive**. Let's review the list Peter gave to us, which his readers and we ourselves would be wise to carefully fulfill.

Peter said that we are to:

- 1) submit to every human institution
- 2) act as freemen (not enslaved to sin)
- 3) be bondslaves of God (joyfully)
- 4) honor all men
- 5) love the brotherhood
- 6) fear God
- 7) honor the king (All seven from 1Peter 2:13-17)

** Do you recall if there is ever a time when we would not be in submission to the government?

Yes - Humbly and respectfully, we are to refuse to submit when man's law contradicts with God's authority which has been expressed in His Word. cf. Acts 4:18-20 and Acts 5:27-29

MOTIVATE

** "How can I know if I am following the Holy Spirit's lead or I am simply doing whatever is on my mind to do?" That was the original question which introduced this series and so far we have enjoyed learning about four key elements of God's expressed will for Christians as they live their lives being "**Led by the Spirit**". Those four elements were; we are to be **Saved, Spirit-filled, Sanctified and Submissive**.

Today we will look at element number five of God's expressed will for Christians who are being "**Led by the Spirit**". As unpopular as it may seem, God's will for the life of Spirit led Christians is that we are to be willing to experience "**Suffering**" for His name sake. Let's once again return to 1Peter, this time at the end of chapter four, to learn what the Word of God has to say about our "**Suffering**" for the glory of Christ. Our passage is 1Peter 4:19-5:11.

Read passage (Chapter 4, V:19-5:5) (Chapter 5:6-11)

Opening Prayer

Suffering

INVESTIGATE

V.19 ** As we begin this familiar portion of 1Peter, how does the apostle remind his readers that their suffering is not accidental?

He says that it is, "according to the will of God". cf. 1Peter 3:17

** Is there a type of suffering that might not fit into this "will of God" classification?

Yes - that would be any suffering brought upon us due to our sinful behavior. cf. 1Peter 4:15

All see - Hebrews 12:3-11

Then to be specific then, suffering according to the will of God is when we are living righteously, in genuine obedience to the Word of God; and we experience the world's rejection of Christ and His righteousness which they observe in us. cf. 1Peter 4:12-13

** So back in 1Peter 4:19, when the heat is on what are we to do? What overt action are we to take in response to the suffering which God has allowed to come our way because we stand up for Jesus Christ?

We are to "entrust [our] souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right".
cf. 2Thessalonians 3:1-3, 1Peter 2:23

Chapter 5, Verse 1-11

V. 1 ** Since it is the expressed will of God for all Christians to be willing to endure "**Suffering**" for His name sake, how is the church to function or relate to itself during these times of suffering?

Peter answers that question by dealing with the leaders in the church first.

** Is Peter in the command mode here?

No - He says, "I exhort". We have seen this word used many times before by the apostle Paul. Parakaleo literally means "to call to one's side". Peter was not abusing his apostolic authority, but rather was appealing to them as one who had been there.

V. 2 ** So what does Peter want the elders to do in the midst of all of the suffering which the Lord has allowed to come upon His church?

They are to "shepherd the flock of God". One of the most serious charges in Scripture, the elder is accountable to God for how he takes care of his brothers and sisters which the Lord has placed under his wing. cf. Hebrews 13:17 and Colossians 4:17

** Did you notice the proximity of God's flock?

Peter says that it is "among" the elders. We have been built into the household of God and are members of one another. The elder must be personally involved in the lives of their flock and deeply caring for their needs. cf. 1Peter 2:4-5 and 1Timothy 3:14-15

** Peter now lists three sets of motives for an elder, two here in verse two and one more in verse three. Each set comes with a positive motive to employ and a negative one to avoid. Let's look at these individually and see how we can apply them to our own lives.

Set Number 1 - "not under compulsion, but voluntarily"

First, a proper Biblical "compulsion" from the apostle Paul is listed in 1Corinthians 9:16. Paul was compelled to serve His Lord because of all that God had done for him by forgiving his sin and granting him eternal life!

A voluntary spirit being displayed by:
Paul - Philippians 3:7-8

Peter - 1Peter 1:3

John - 1John 1:1-4 (3John 4)

Set Number 2 - “not for sordid gain, but with eagerness”

Is it wrong to receive financial reward for Christian service?

No - 1Corinthians 9:14 and Luke 10:7

Even though money is primarily in view here, what other types of sordid gain could be considered improper as a motive for serving Christ?

Personal popularity, prestige, social influence are all to be avoided as motives.
cf. 1Timothy 3:8-9

** Following the godly elder’s example, if we are to serve one another “not for personal gain”, what is the motive we are to have?

Eagerness! Towards the church, Ephesians 4:11-12 Towards the lost, 2Peter 3:9

Set Number 3 - “nor yet as lording it over..., but proving to be examples to the flock.”

V. 3 ** Can you think of a group of Jesus’ day that did lord it over those allotted to their charge?

Absolutely - the Pharisees! All see Matthew 23:1-7

** Back in 1Peter 5:3, if we are not to be like the Pharisees; what is our motive to be?

We should be driven to set the proper example for others to follow. cf. 1Corinthians 4:16 and 11:1, Philippians 3:17 and 2Thessalonians 3:7-9

We should be able to say to our children, neighbors, co-workers, fellow Christians and spouses - “follow my example”. Remember, sheep are not driven, but led.

V. 4 ** As we now pick up the pace, what word of encouragement does Peter offer to the elder, and to all who would follow his godly example?

They will receive a reward if they are obedient to the call during these times of suffering.

** Who is bringing this reward to us?

Our gracious Lord and Savior! cf. Revelation 22:12, Matthew 16:27, 2Corinthians 5:10

V. 5 ** Having specifically addressed the elders, to whom does Peter now turn his attention?

The young men of the church and “all of you”. Here is our chance to behave properly while suffering, and to bring glory to God.

** With what clothing is the Christian to adorn himself during times of suffering?

“...clothe yourselves with humility toward one another...”

****** What does this expression (clothe yourselves) conjure up in your mind?

- 1) It is calling for an effective action
- 2) We do it to ourselves
- 3) It is what people will see (our adornment)
- 4) It should represent our hearts!

V. 6 ****** Do you see the environment for our humility?

“...under the mighty hand of God...”

****** When we endure suffering for the name of Christ, while maintaining a humble attitude before God almighty; what will He do for us in His time?

Amazingly, He will exalt us! cf. 1Corinthians 3:8, 4:5

V. 7 ****** Peter fully understands that suffering for Christ can bring with it worry and anxiety. What does he tell us to do with this emotional side of our suffering?

“...casting all your anxiety upon Him...” It is for God’s glory that we are willing to suffer, so if we begin to falter we should immediately turn to him for comfort.

cf. Philippians 4:6-7, Matthew 6:25,31-33

****** If we are faithful to do this, how do we know that our gracious God will protect us?

Because “He cares for [us]”. cf. Romans 8:31

V. 8 ****** So what do we have to control during our times of suffering for the name of Christ?

Our minds! “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert.” cf. 1Peter 1:13 and 4:7

****** Who is our adversary in this battle for Christ’s glory?

The devil - cf. Ephesians 6:10-12

****** Peter says that our adversary is “like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” Is he always this obvious?

No - there are times when the enemy will attack trying to look like one of us!

cf. Acts 20:28-30, 2Corinthians 11:13-15

V. 9 ****** So in the midst of our suffering for the truth of the gospel, what is to be our preoccupation regarding this deceptive adversary?

We must “resist him, firm in our faith”.

****** Peter let’s us know that we are not alone, who else has been successful in “**Suffering**” for the Lord?

“...your brethren who are in the world...” have been experiencing the same type of suffering. They have done it by God’s grace and so can we! (2Timothy 3:12)

V.10 ** We know that it is God's expressed will for Christians to experience "**Suffering**" while living for Jesus Christ, but how much longer will it go on?

"...a little while..." Possibly our entire lives!
cf. James 4:14, Psalm 90:10 and 2Corinthians 4:16-17

** Peter says that the "God of all grace...called you to His eternal glory in Christ". What has He yet to do for us in the future?

He will: **Perfect** (to bring to completion), **Confirm** (to stabilize by providing support), **Strengthen** (with God's indwelling strength) and **Establish** (a secure foundation upon which something rests).

** How does that encourage your heart's willingness to accept the "**Suffering**" role to which God has called us?

We know that we can do all things through Him who strengthens us! (Philippians 4:13)

V.11 ** What should be our worshipful response to all that God has given to us, even though we have been called to suffer for His name's sake?

We should respond in worship - "To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen!"

EXTRICATE

** This study has shown us the expressed will of God for all Christians to be willing to experience "**Suffering**" for the name of Christ. What did verse 19 of chapter four teach us about that suffering?

It is actually the design of God and proves it is according to His will. We should respond with trust!

DELINEATE

** With what clothing should all Christians adorn themselves while going through this God ordained suffering?

We should put on the clothing of humility (under the mighty hand of God)!

EVALUATE

** It has been wonderful to realize that God's will for our lives is for us to be **Saved, Spirit-filled, Sanctified** and **Submissive**. Do you feel the same way about His will for us to be willing to experience "**Suffering**" for His name?

We can know that we rejoice over all of God's expressed will, by the degree of humility we show towards Him and those which He brings across our path.

ACTIVATE

** Next week we are going to bring this series to a conclusion by taking a close look at Psalm 37. We hope to live each day being "**Led by the Spirit**", let's ask Him to grant us the humility needed to follow the Spirit's leading in our life.

Closing prayer