

☞ **1 Peter** *(opening slide)*

Review: God has offered us the deal of the ages! Since we have received such a great deal from God in salvation, we should be motivated to change our thinking and our behavior. This makes us peculiar people. Unlike many unbelievers, we show proper respect to those in authority and submit to their leadership. Our marriages are filled with love and respect and lots of kind words. Our friendships with other believers are marked by harmony and compassion as we follow the Lord together. Even our responses to those who mistreat us are different because of our faith in Jesus. We don't try to get even, but we keep on doing good and pursuing peace because we know that God is watching.

☞ **Coping with the Crucible**

1 Peter 4:1-19

The Crucible is the "fiery ordeals" we face. It's a severe, searching test. It's the "refining by fire" that Peter mentions in 1 Peter 1:7.

☞ To Cope means to **deal with problems and difficulties calmly and successfully.**

Verse 12 says in essence that the Crucible should not be surprising to us.

John 15:20

If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also.

1 Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man.

"When going through the fiery trials of life, don't focus on the blame, but rather on the benefit of the outcome of the trial you are experiencing."

There are actually some benefits from the Crucible.

1. ☞ Understand that Suffering Purifies the Saint (4:1-6)

When life is easy, we drift into carelessness and sin; but suffering changes our values and goals. The "fiery trial" is a furnace that purifies the gold and allows God to remove the impurities. Here is what suffering does for us:

☞ **Suffering identifies us with Christ (v. 1).**

Chapter 4 begins with "Since Christ suffered... Here we are again. Jesus is always our example and motivation. Since he went through the Crucible, we must be ready to also. He coped perfectly with it. We must submit ourselves to him and cope with it as well.

He suffered for us to save us from sin. As we suffer for Him - and with Him - we learn to hate sin and love Him more. Peter encourages us to have "the mind of Christ" and to realize that our identification with Christ means victory over sin.

☞ **Suffering reminds us that life is short (v. 2-3).**

We take life for granted until we have to suffer, and then our values change. Peter contrasts evil human desires with living for God's will. These are opposed to each other. Rather than live in the will of sinful men, we must live in the will of God.

Galatians 5:17

the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other...

☞ **Suffering points ahead to God's judgment (v. 4-6).**

A Christian lives either according to the judgment of men or by the judgment of God. The world thinks it is strange that we no longer join them in sin... One of the things we learn in Discipleship is that following Christ can be costly. It can cost you relationships, since your friends may think you're strange because of your new behavior. In fact, they may speak evil of you. But their evil-speaking does not upset us; God will judge them someday. They will give account to Him!

Hebrews 4:13

Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

It is important that Christians "arm themselves" with the same attitude toward the world, sin, and suffering that Jesus had while on earth. If we face suffering without a spiritual attitude, suffering will disillusion us rather than decontaminate us.

Suffering Purifies the Saint.

2. ☞ **Understand that Suffering Unifies the Church (4:7-11)**

Peter says again, "Be sober - serious-minded!" (See [1:13](#) and [5:8](#).) He reminds us that Christ is coming soon.

1 John 2:18

Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.

 **We pray for each other (v. 7).**

In the midst of suffering, saints have responsibilities to one another. Prayer is one of them.

Colossians 4:2

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

Ephesians 6:18

be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

 **We love each other (v. 8-9).**

Another responsibility is love; to “love each other deeply” is sometimes translated “fervent” and means “stretched out.” Christian love never reaches a breaking point! It is bad enough when the world accuses the saints; the saints ought not to accuse one another. Love will help cover the sins of the saints. Love does not cleanse sin, but it does cover sin in that we do not go around talking about other people's sins.

Colossians 3:14 (*along with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience*)
And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

2 Thessalonians 1:3

the love every one of you has for each other is increasing.

One of the characteristics of a true disciple is love for others, especially other believers. One of the ways we do this is to open our homes as well as our hearts.

 **We serve each other (v. 10-11).**

Finally, Christians need to serve the Lord and each other in spite of persecution. Your gifts, skills, and talents are not just for your own benefit. We are to use those things to bless others. It's all from God's grace anyway. God gives us the gifts and the strength to use all things for His glory.

Suffering Unifies the Church

3.  Suffering Glorifies the Lord (4:12-19)

We expect trials (v. 12).

Trials are not strange to the Christian life; they are to be expected. Trials that are part of the will of God are not warnings that we are disobeying Him; they are God's tools for perfecting His own. Remember, Jesus was persecuted and promised we would be too.

☞ We rejoice in trials (v. 13-14).

When trials come, we are suffering for His sake and sharing suffering with Him. The suffering we endure now is a prelude to the glory that we will share at His coming.

Matthew 5:11-12

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. **12** Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven

☞ Suffering for Christ indicates that **his glory is evident in our lives**. And, the Spirit of God "rests with refreshing power" (literal translation of v. 14) upon the suffering believer.

2 Corinthians 12:10

for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

The more we have to rely on God's power, the stronger we actually are.

☞ We are not ashamed in trials (v. 15-16).

If we suffer because of our own stupidity or bad behavior, then we deserve it and we get no "extra credit" from God.

1 Peter 2:20

...But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.

Roman law required each citizen to pledge his loyalty to the emperor. Sometimes the Roman official would write the name of Christ on the ground or on a wall and ask the Christian to spit on it. If the Christian refused, he would be arrested, tried, and perhaps killed. By bearing the name of Christ (Christian), they were put to shame before their friends. But we are not ashamed because in God's eyes we are honoring him.

☞ We witness in trials (v. 17-18).

If God sends trials to the church now, this is evidence that He will someday judge the lost. We have our trials now and our glory later; the lost have their glory now and their suffering later. God begins His judgment at His house (the church).

--Larry Osborne... *We assume God's judgment should begin with those who do the greatest evil. But it doesn't. It never has. It begins with us. God's judgment always begins with his own. He'll do whatever it takes to ensure that we bear the fruit of righteousness. If it means pruning, he'll prune. If it means using his enemies to teach us a lesson, he'll use his enemies.*

So, we should be ready for trials. But we also understand that God is just and everyone will face his judgment someday.

Proverbs 11:31

If the righteous receive their due on earth, how much more the ungodly and the sinner!

4. 📖 **We commit ourselves to God (v. 19).**

The word for "commit" used here is a banking term; it refers to the act of leaving an amount on deposit for safekeeping. God sends the fiery trial to burn away the impurities, and we commit ourselves to Him for safekeeping, knowing that He cannot fail us. We can be sure that God will "pay interest" on our deposit. But note that we commit ourselves in 📖 more than just intellectual assent. We commit ourselves by **doing good** no matter what.

Romans 2:7

To those who by persistence in doing good... he will give eternal life.

Galatians 6:9

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

📖 This is a daily and hourly **surrender, living to please Him** and serving others.

Psalms 37:5-6

Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this: **6** He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.

Christians will go through fiery trials before Christ returns. The world has always hated the name of Christ and will continue to hate it. If we identify ourselves with the name of Christ, the world will hate us. If we compromise, we may escape persecution, but we will also miss the blessing and glory of sharing Christ's sufferings.

📖 **So, don't compromise, but rather, cope (calmly & successfully) with the crucible.**