

Bible Study Notes 1 Peter 4-5

7/19/20 – 1 Peter 4:12-19 – Suffering as a Christian

Verses 12-13

- “Beloved, do not be surprised” - Throughout the letter, Peter has connected the life of a Christian to the life of Christ (see 1 Peter 2:19-24, alluding to Isaiah 52-53).
 - Now he reminds us not to be surprised at unjust persecution, because it is sharing in Christ’s sufferings. See Jesus’ own words in Matthew 5:10-12.
 - “Fiery trial” – *“puriosis”* Literally something being tested with fire. This is a common analogy in Scripture, that just as impurity is removed from silver (Prov. 25:4, Isaiah 1:22-25), so faith is tried by tribulation (Daniel 3:8-28). Although the fiery trial is unpleasant to undergo, God’s purpose is to confirm the sons of God who have faith in Christ.
- The time factor: We are baptized into Christ’s death and resurrection, making us partake and follow in the pattern of His life. Just as Christ suffered for a time, died, and then was raised/exalted by His Father, so Christians now live in a time of humiliation and rejection. The Last Day, like Christ’s Third Day, is appointed as the time when we will be glorified.
 - “When His glory is revealed” – “apokalypto” (root of apocalypse), a technical term in the New Testament for Christ’s return in glory (Mark 14:61-62, 2Thess. 1:7, 1 Pet. 1:7)
- “Insulted for the name of Christ” – On account of belonging to Him (a la Matt. 5:11-12). This can take the form of being labelled backward for not embracing homosexuality, remaining faithful to Christ even under torture and threats, being ridiculed for missing events because you make your faith a priority over everything else, being called a “Jesus freak.”

Verses 14-15

- The forgiveness of our sins is not a blank check from God to live how we please. In Romans 6:12-18, St. Paul explains that the freedom we’re given from slavery to sin actually binds us in obedience to God. Therefore, our life is not our own to live as our sinful flesh would have us (“you were bought with a price” 1 Cor. 6:19-20). Rather, the Holy Spirit works to sanctify our thoughts, words, and actions.
 - Don’t confuse suffering because you acted stupidly or wickedly with genuine persecution and sharing in the one who “committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth.” (1 Peter 2:22, Isaiah 53:9)

Verse 16

- “let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God” – Peter knows both what it is to suffer the just consequences of being ashamed of Christ (Matt. 26:69-75), and to boldly proclaim Him and rejoice at suffering for it (Acts 5:27-42). So Peter warns us against the temptation to be ashamed and deny Christ to save our own comfort and praise of men, but rather to give praise to God when we suffer as those rejected by the world.

Verses 17-19

- “It is time for judgment to begin” – There was a marked shift after the Crucifixion. Jesus said that “whoever believes in Him is not condemned” but that whoever does not is “condemned already because he has not believed in the only [begotten] Son of God” (John 3:18). Therefore the judgment is not for sin, but for rejection of the Sin-bearer, Jesus Christ. The wrath of God was borne by the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29).
 - The Judgment of heaven is pronounced by the Church
 - Matthew 16:19 & 18:18-20; John 20:19-23 – The church is given authority to bind and release, to admit and bar people from heaven on the basis of their confession of faith or unbelief.
 - 1 Cor. 5:1-5 – An example of the “binding” key used against the man proudly practicing sexual immorality. He is excluded in the Name of Jesus, because by his ungodly living, he denies the One who Redeemed him, was crucified for him, and has walked away from salvation. However, the goal is not permanent exclusion! It is that his sinful flesh would be judged, his old Adam be drowned and die, and he may live on the Day of the Lord (the Day of Judgment).
- This also recalls Jesus’ discussion of election in Matthew 7:13-14 about the narrow road that leads to life. There are myriad ways to deny Christ and remain in sin and death, but only by receiving the incarnate, suffering, dead and raised Christ through faith can a sinner be saved.
 - Yet, just because it is narrow does not mean it is impossible. Matthew 19:25-26, Jesus explains that though this is impossible with man, it is possible with God, and that God *desires* all to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4). What excludes a person from salvation, having heard the Word of God, is their own stubborn rejection of it (choosing the wide road).
- Verse 19 is a summary statement of verses 12-18. This is our calling as God’s children.

7/26/20 - 1 Peter 5:1-3 – Shepherd the Flock of God

- “Elders” – Not the same as today’s lay elders in the congregation. “Presbyteroi” is a term for clergy which refers to their spiritual authority. The term “pastor” comes from the analogy of Jesus as the Good Shepherd (John 10) and His Church as a flock, pastors being shepherds serving under Him.
 - The term for congregation elder is more connected with the elders in Israel who were leaders and representatives of the congregation and helpers of Moses (Exodus 18:12-22)
 - Another term used by Paul of clergy is “*episkopos*” which is used of the oversight which a pastor exercises among the congregation. (1 Timothy 3:1-7). Deacons (*diakonoi*), although the shepherding task didn’t entirely fall on their shoulders, were formally received by the Church and devoted themselves to assisting the clergy (see Acts 6:1-7)
- Peter, even though he has much notoriety in the early Church (Peter the Rock, spokesman for the Apostles, preacher on Pentecost, spokesman before the Council, welcomed Gentiles in Acts 10, and one of the leaders who offered fellowship to Paul

in Gal. 2:9), Peter calls himself a fellow elder. He puts himself on the same level as those in the congregations he writes.

- Peter must be humble about these things, because even though he is recognized as a “great one” in the Church, He also denied the Lord and was later restored (John 21), and faltered on eating with Gentiles for fear of the circumcision party (Gal. 2:11-14).
- What does set Peter apart is that he is a witness of the sufferings of Christ (an Apostle, sent out as an eyewitness, Luke 24:46-48)
- Yet, together with his hearers and all believers, by grace he has been made a partaker in the coming glory at Christ’s return (His *apocalypse*).
- “Shepherd the flock of God among you” Each pastor (shepherd) is given a portion of God’s flock to care for. See Acts 20:28, where Paul speaks to the Ephesian elders (pastors) and says, “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.” The work of the shepherd is to keep watch on himself and the flock...God’s flock. The Holy Spirit assigned this lot and the responsibility for oversight (*episkopos*). The flock remains God’s flock, and all those people belong to God where the pastor is simply a servant who tends to God’s household.
- “Not under compulsion” – That is not as the burden of the Law, which appointed Levites for service whether they wanted to or not.
- “Not for shameful gain” – Not just “in it for the paycheck.” Think of care facilities where there are some aides who love what they do and care for the residents, while others do the bare minimum just to keep their job. A pastor’s work requires love, but that’s a difficult thing to test for.
- “willingly...eagerly” – Describes intentionality and dedication to the work, like the kind you have when you do what you love. Eagerly is more than just excited, but devoted, so that even when disappointment strikes, the pastor does not prove to be a “hireling who cares nothing for the sheep” (John 10:12-13)
- “Not domineering...but being examples” – The marked difference between living under Moses and living under Christ is the absence of compulsion. Accordingly, the pastor is not a taskmaster whipping people into submission to Christ. Instead, his focus is on living as an example of faith and holiness of living.

8/2/20 - 1 Peter 5:4-8 - Shepherd the Flock (continued)

Verse 4-5a

- “When the Chief Shepherd” (lit. “arch-shepherd”) – Referring to the ongoing truth that Jesus is the Good Shepherd who laid down His life (John 10), and has set human shepherds to care for His flock on earth (John 21:15-17).
- “appears” – “*phaino*” Another technical term for the return of Christ, like *apocalypse*. Where *apocalypse* refers to his *revealing* to both believers and unbelievers, *phaino* carries the sense of appearing to His beloved, who love Him though they have not seen Him (John 20:29, 1 Peter 1:8). It carries with it the weight of Jesus’ promise that He will return to take us to a new heavens and earth.
- “Receive the unfading crown of glory” – (crown = “*stephanos*” like the first martyr, Stephen (Acts 8)) Unfading is in contrast to the world which is perishable along

with its rewards (1 Cor. 9:25, perishable wreath). Like Isaiah 40:8, “the grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God endures forever.” Another reference to a crown after faithful endurance is promised to Christians in Revelation 2:10.

- The crown of glory refers to an unspecified reward, but recognition of faithful service for the “undershepherds” of Christ. Compare to the place Jesus promises to the Apostles in Matt. 19:28.
- A final word of wisdom for younger pastors to defer and submit to those who have ministered longer. Not as a matter of seniority (“It shall not be so among you”), but seasoning. Likewise, the Christian who has suffered intense persecution knows more than the zealous, excited new convert.

Verse 5b

- “Clothe yourselves, all of you...” – Now Peter addresses all believers. The word for “clothe yourselves” is a word only found here in the New Testament. As opposed to Col. 3:12 which refers to putting on a garment, this word means “to bind on”.
- “Humility toward one another” – Humility is not only put on when other people are around. It is bound firmly to us (like our skin).
 - This brings up both the active and passive nature of being humble.
 - Humility is an attitude to actively strive for toward one another. We follow the example of Christ, who “though He was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped” (Phil. 2), and who rode as King into Jerusalem “Humble and mounted on a donkey” (Matt. 21).
 - Humility is also something that is taught through the experience of finding out we’re not as smart and competent as we think we are. It comes from hurtful interactions against us (persecutions mentioned above), and also from facing our own sins.
 - Humility is generally something that is noticed by others in us, rather than something we boast about having attained. It is also a life-long process and can be harder for some than others due to personality and the weakness of our flesh.
- “God opposes the proud...” – Proverbs 3:34 A quote from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament. This was the common translation used by Jews after Alexander the Great made it the lingua franca of the Mediterranean region. Jesus often quoted from the Septuagint because it was the familiar translation to His hearers (see Luke 4:16-20).

Verse 6-8

- “Humble yourselves” – The active sense of humility.
- “Under the mighty hand of God” – The might of man is usually wielded in power over others and military conquest. God has no need to prove Himself to us, but this is a recognition of faith that all things are under His omnipotent control.
- “So that at the proper time” – A special word is used here, *Kairos*, or “appointed time” as opposed to *chronos* which has to do with the passage of hours & days.

Kairos can refer to an appointed season for fruit (Matt. 21:33-34), but here it refers to God ruling over all time and orchestrating it for the good of His people (see Romans 5:6, or consider when Joseph was in prison).

- So because of God's mighty hand which rules over all, we commit our days into His hand, sure that He knows the right time for us to be raised up and relieved of what burdens us.

God knows full well when times of gladness Shall be the needful thing for thee. When He has tried thy soul with sadness And from all guile has found thee free, He comes to thee all unaware And makes thee own His loving care. <i>If Thou but Trust in God (LSB 750:4)</i>
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- “Casting all your anxieties on Him” – Literally throwing them upon Him.
 - Anxieties in life will come. A better word may be “concerns” which Paul has for the churches (2 Cor. 11:28). When Jesus says do not be anxious about your life (Matt. 6:25), His warning is against letting those concerns grow bigger than God. When in faith, we cast our concerns on God, trusting that He is able to direct, provide, and comfort us in His love, then the concerns we have will be in the right place. In Matt. 13:22 in the Parable of the Sower, the *cares* of life choke the Word because faith is misplaced in earthly business and people. See also Luke 10:38-42, where Jesus reminds Martha of putting anxieties and troubles in their proper place and not neglecting being first of all a *hearer* of the Word.
- “Because He cares for you” – This turns the tables on what worries us. You know what’s on God’s mind? You. He has concern for you which drives Him to send you His manifold help. “And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily.” (Luke 18:7-8)
- “Be sober-minded. Be watchful.” – Two commands in a row, that we should have our wits about us and not be inebriated either physiologically or spiritually. Just as pilots and train engineers can’t drink 12 hours before their shift, our walk of faith requires a clear head. Be watchful is a form of the verb “to arise” (incidentally also used of Jesus’ resurrection, “He is not here; He has risen”). Watchful meaning awake and alert.
- “Your adversary the devil” – Satan in Hebrew means accuser, which is the same as Greek *antidikos* here. Devil, or *diabolos* refers to his work of dividing us from God and one another.
- “Prowls around like a roaring lion” – Refers us back to roaring lions in the Old Testament
 - Samson, a type of Christ, tore a roaring lion apart with his bare hands, causing something sweet (eternal life) to come from the enemy who previously devoured our race. (Judges 14:5-14)
 - Christ from the cross described his foes as a “ravening and roaring lion” (Ps. 22:13)
 - This reminds us that it is Christ who does battle with the lion, the Devil, and we share in His victory.